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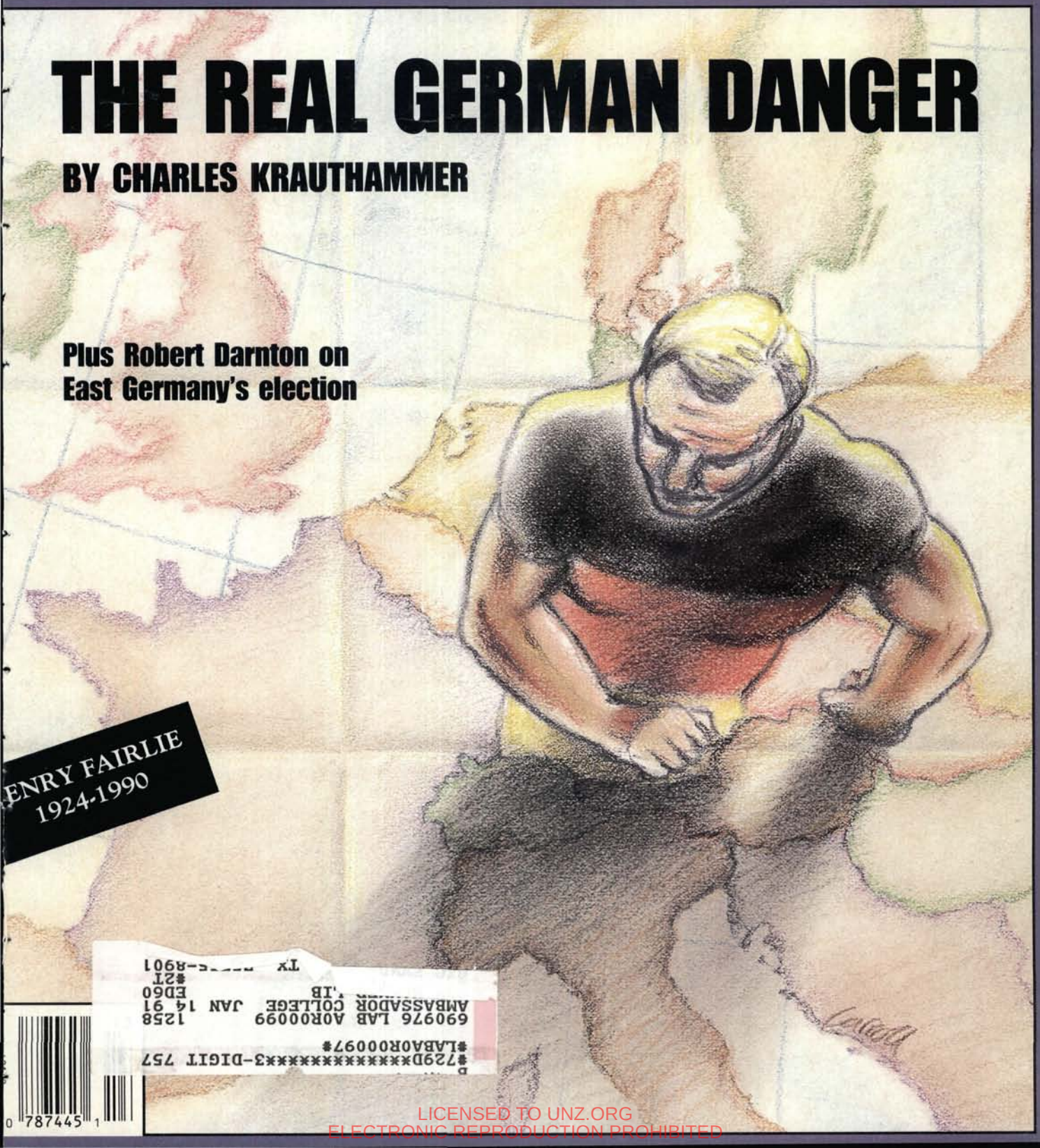
THE NEW REPUBLIC

Hermione Lee on Germaine Greer's mommy · Arturo Cruz Jr. on Cuba



THE REAL GERMAN DANGER

BY CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER

Plus Robert Darnton on East Germany's election

HENRY FAIRLIE
1924-1990

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CORRESPONDENCE

Fighting words

To the editors:

In "Soldier Boys, Soldier Girls" (February 19) you say that distinctions between combat and non-combat jobs are broadly eroding, that modern technology makes physiological factors irrelevant on the battlefield, and that "front lines" are not necessarily more vulnerable than rear areas. But the unique demands placed upon infantrymen, tank crews, and special operations forces (the only career fields completely closed to women) remain unchanged: to perform arduous physical tasks for extended periods under the most appalling conditions imaginable. A recent illustration of the brutal, timeless nature of sustained ground combat can be found in the experiences of British paratroopers and marines in the Falklands campaign.

Further, the undeniable fact that no area of a modern battlefield is totally safe is not an argument for women in combat units. Look at any military conflict (including the Panama invasion): the vast majority of casualties are inflicted and suffered by combat units, not by those providing logistical or administrative support to them.

Your editorial also notes that denying women full access to combat effectively precludes them from attaining the very highest position in the military. This is true. Our armed forces exist solely to deter wars and, if deterrence fails, to fight and win them. Although the services do provide ample opportunities for advancement, they do not exist to guarantee identical career progression to all who enter.

ALAN C. CATE
Cornwall, New York

The writer is an infantry captain in the U.S. Army.

To the editors:

Women's lack of testosterone, their smaller body size, and their emotions have been used to exclude them from medicine, law, and politics in the past. The military appears to be the only male bastion where such arguments continue to be given any credibility.

Why do you think that aggression is a quality that produces better soldiers? We may like to think that our fighting boys are all a bunch of Rambos, but in fact they are not. Tractability and docility are the qualities socialized into new recruits, not blood-and-guts machismo. Soldiers who exhibit (in your opinion) excessive testosterone are not the sort that we necessarily want to see on the streets of Panama City.

It's also unfortunate that your solution to the problem of women in combat is to commission yet another study of women in the military. Military women have been studied probably more than any other occupational group. But because studies have failed to demonstrate that women cannot do the work, the military continues to commission ever more studies. It is not surprising that so few women signed up for the test program; it's remarkable that any woman would agree to be watched, recorded, and measured in a study designed to justify excluding women from combat.

We should be studying men to figure out why they have so much trouble accepting women as equals.

CHRISTINE L. WILLIAMS
Austin, Texas

The writer is the author of *Gender Differences at Work.*

To the editors:

Reading "Soldier Boys, Soldier Girls," I was reminded of a chapter in Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*. In her attempts to understand the "truth" about women, Woolf had turned to volumes in the British Museum written about women by men. Of primary interest to her was *The Mental, Moral, and Physical Inferiority of the Female Sex*. She discovered that men are the measure of all things, men are the norm.

Not much has changed in the sixty years since Woolf made her discovery. I could think only that the world would be a wonderful place indeed if women were the universal standard against which men were compared for military duty. Instead of wondering whether women can meet male standards of aggression we would ask: Could male soldiers possibly show the necessary compassion to keep the peace? Would they show adequate revulsion to violence, or might they break into fighting at the least little provocation?

CAROL CORBIN
Iowa City, Iowa

To the editors:

To say that I was disappointed in your February 19 cover would be a gross understatement. With one visual image you completely undermine the point that you tried to make in publishing Jacob Weisberg's "Gays in Arms." If the wink was not obvious enough, the fact that the GI is sporting an earring (surely not allowed by regulations), as well as a purple tie, clinches the point. Why not show the female soldier hiking her Army-issued khakis above the ankle to distract her comrade-in-arms?

But TNR would not think of portraying something so blatantly sexist. However, gay and lesbian bashing has become the standard fare of comedians and commentators. Homosexuals have become the last socially acceptable form of minority humor.

JOHN D. KIMBALL
Santa Monica, California

Oops (cont'd.)

To the editors:

As a Quaker and a journalist who has covered local, national, and international stories for American newspapers and magazines, I am appalled with what must be your ignorance, irresponsibility, or plain outright propaganda regarding the upcoming elections in Nicaragua ("Sandinista Fix?" February 19).

Your thinking that anybody but Daniel Ortega will win the election is like believing Americans would have voted for a British candidate for the American presidency after George Washington and his loyal band of courageous Americans had won the American Revolution.

Everywhere in Nicaragua, in every town and every city, if you care to visit, you will see signs, "They shall not pass!" "There will be no surrender!"

I ask you for more journalistic responsibility, investigation, and up-front honesty. You should be ashamed of yourselves.

JERRY COPELAND
Florence, Oregon

Don't Mencken it

To the editors:

Garry Wills's review of *The Diary of H. L. Mencken* ("The Ugly American," February 19) reeks of bad faith and leaves so many wrong impressions that one letter could not correct them. Suffice it to make two points. Regarding Mencken's alleged racism: besides championing black writers, getting along with his black neighbors, and opposing segregation in municipal facilities, in 1935 he supported a law making lynching a federal crime because he thought the "Ku Kluxers" he despised so ferociously might otherwise go scot-free. His column condemning a lynching on the Eastern Shore brought violence against *Sun* delivery trucks.

Regarding his alleged anti-Semitism: Mencken, almost alone in America, favored opening America's borders to the German Jews. He wrote this in a *Sun* column in 1939, before any death camps were in operation and when Hitler was eager to have the Jews leave.

Is Wills unimpressed with, or merely ignorant of, these inconvenient facts? In 1915 Mencken wrote to Theodore Dreiser about TNR: "The sheet is so damna-

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A Weekly Journal of Opinion

MARCH 26, 1990

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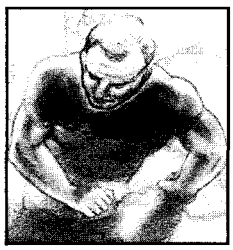

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FROM WASHINGTON

Stat wars

It's the battle of the stats. On one side, the House Ways and Means Committee, seconded by the Congressional Budget Office. On the other, the White House Office of Management and Budget, seconded by the president's Council of Economic Advisers. The issue: Has the federal tax burden shifted from the rich to the poor during the past decade, or the other way around?

Ways and Means: In 1980 the bottom fifth of taxpayers paid an average of 8.4 percent of their income in taxes; by 1990 they were paying 9.7 percent—an increase of one-sixth. By contrast the average tax burden on the top fifth dropped from 27.3 percent to 25.8 percent—down by a twentieth. For the top five percent, the drop was a tenth.

OMB: *au contraire*. In 1990 the bottom fifth paid 1.6 percent of all federal taxes—the same share as in 1980. By contrast the share paid by the top fifth rose from 55.7 percent to 58.1 percent, and the share paid by the top five percent rose from 27.6 percent to 30.4 percent. (All 1990 figures on both sides of the argument are projections.)

Certs is a breath mint! Certs is a candy mint! Stop—you're both right! The affluent paid a bigger share of the taxes over the 1980s because the affluent received a bigger share of the income. As a share of their own income, their taxes went down, while that of the poorest Americans went up. The average bottom-fifth family earned 86 percent of the poverty line in 1980; 84 percent in 1990. The average top fifth family earned 8.61 times the poverty line in 1980; 11.34 in 1990. The top five percent: 15.42 times the poverty line in 1980; 22.52 in 1990. As a result, the share of all family income going to the bottom fifth dropped from 4.5 percent to 3.7 percent; the share going to the top fifth rose from 47.4 percent to 51.8 percent; the share of the top five percent rose from 21.4 percent to 26.2 percent.

In short, affluent people's share of the taxes went up a lot less than their share of the income, and thus their tax burden went down. The least affluent group's share of the income went down while their share of the taxes stayed the same, thus their tax burden went up. The top five percent's share of *after-tax* income rose from 19.6 percent in 1980 to 25 percent in 1990. The increase—5.4 percent—is greater than the total income of the bottom fifth.

The administration response to the Ways and Means broadside is a stew of red herrings. Since much of the shift in the tax burden is explained by the growth of Social Security taxes (which hit wages up to a ceiling and exempt dividends, interest, and capital gains), OMB notes that the Social Security program as a whole—taxes and benefits—is much more progressive. But the Ways and Means income figures include Social Security benefits, along with other government cash transfer payments. OMB notes that non-cash government transfers—Food Stamps, Medicaid, housing—are not included. True. But these welfare programs went down as shares of total income in the 1980s. Figuring them in would make the income shift from poor to rich (and thus the tax burden shift from rich to poor) appear more severe, not less so. (According to other Ways and Means figures, after-tax income *including* food and housing benefits dropped 7.7 percent for the bottom fifth and rose 15.8 percent for the top fifth from 1981 to 1987.)

OMB challenges various assumptions made by Ways and Means about who actually pays the corporate income tax, the employer's portion of Social Security, and so on. These assumptions are open to debate, but different assumptions would apply to both 1980 and 1990, and would not change the general conclusion about the trend between those two years. OMB also challenges the base year of 1980, arguing that was a year when inflation caused maximum distortions in the tax code. But those distortions—mainly "bracket creep" pushing lower-income people into higher tax brackets and the erosion in value of the basic exemptions—made taxes less progressive, not more so. Choosing a more "normal" year would make the shifts between then and now seem even more severe.

If the administration were honest, it would say: heck yes, the rich got richer and paid less in taxes. That was the whole idea of supply-side economics. What's important isn't the shares of the pie but the size of the pie. Increasing the after-tax reward for savings, investment, and entrepreneurship benefited the affluent directly but everyone indirectly by making the economy more prosperous. That's the argument. But George Bush won't make it. Instead, he says about opponents of his own supply-side initiative, the proposed capital gains tax cut (most of the direct benefit of which would go to people making more than $200,000): "I am sick and tired of the demagogues who call this a tax cut for the rich." Bush lacks the political courage of his voodoo economic convictions.

Lawrence B. Lindsey, a Harvard professor who served on Ronald Reagan's Council of Economic Advisers, makes the honest argument in his new book, *The Growth Experiment* (Basic Books). He says, "The principal reason the rich paid a bigger share of taxes was . . . a behavioral response by the rich to lower marginal tax rates." This response was of two types. First, what he calls a "pecuniary" response: taking less trouble to arrange their affairs to minimize taxes. Lindsey's example: charging a $30,000 Cadillac instead of a $70,000 Maserati to the company as a business expense. "Upper-income taxpayers have enormous discretion over how and when they receive income, and over whether it will be exposed to taxation," Lindsey correctly notes. If lower taxes lead them to declare more of their income, it doesn't mean they're any richer.

The "pecuniary" response to lower tax rates is a pure gain for the government, Lindsey argues, though it doesn't do much to expand the economy. The affluent also respond to lower tax rates by working harder and investing more—the classic supply-side response. This does expand the economy as a whole. Lindsey expresses much less confidence about the pure supply-side response than he does about the pecuniary response.

There's no question that reducing high marginal tax rates was and is a good idea, for all the supply-side reasons. But this can be done *without* shifting the *average* tax burden from the rich to the middle-class and poor if it is accompanied by loophole-closing and other steps to reduce that "enormous discretion" Lindsey says affluent people have over declaring income and paying taxes. The 1981 tax cut was a model of doing it the wrong way. The 1986 tax reform—which started as a Democratic response to the perceived unfairness of the 1981 cut, but which the Democrats stupidly let Reagan steal most of the credit for—was a model of doing it right. All the unfair trends discussed at the beginning of this column got worse through the first half of the 1980s and have gotten somewhat better since then.

No form of tax cut is more foolish than Bush's proposed capital gains break. Not only will it add to the unfairness of the tax code, but it will also add to those ways the affluent can arrange their affairs arti-

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

MARCH 26, 1990

ONE IN FOUR

The latest source of despair about the underclass is the estimate, widely publicized in recent weeks, that one in four black men in their twenties is either behind bars, on parole, or on probation. This sad ratio (twenty-three percent, to be precise) compares with one in sixteen for whites and one in ten for Hispanics. Though the estimate comes from a source not wholly disinterested—the Sentencing Project, a Washington group devoted to sentencing reform—it appears, alas, to have been reached reasonably. The same cannot be said for the principal policy implications that the Project sees in its data. The first step toward understanding what will help the underclass is understanding what won't, and the prescriptions of this study are an object lesson.

The study, after documenting the large fraction of blacks in prison, concludes that the solution is to stop putting so many blacks in prison. This is only a slight caricature of the argument. It begins with the correct observation that prisons do almost nothing to help criminals become "productive citizens after release." Indeed, "most carry the stigma of being ex-offenders for some time to come." Yes, but that's the whole idea. Now that everyone has given up on the rehabilitative effects of incarceration, the primary rationale for it is as a deterrent: to convince the criminal and others in his neighborhood that crime doesn't pay—to stigmatize crime. If there is a stigma problem here, it is that in the eyes of many inner-city young men, a criminal history *doesn't* carry any inherent stigma. And that troubling fact is, if anything, an argument against lenient sentencing. If merely labeling someone a criminal has no deterrent effect, it's better to lock him up than to put him on probation: confinement at least temporarily incapacitates him, and gives pause to even the most morally relativistic aspiring criminals.

The Sentencing Project study briskly asserts that the "get tough" approach to crime hasn't worked: "Even with a tripling of the prison population since 1973, at tremendous financial cost, victimization rates since that time have declined less than five percent." But who is to say that victimization rates wouldn't have grown radically if fewer people had been arrested and imprisoned? This is a classic example of the sort of hopelessly ambiguous data in which amateur sociologists always insist on finding clear causality. The National Rifle Association discounts with equal simplemindedness the value of existing gun control laws.

What is most offensive about the Sentencing Project's report is that it couches the call for lenient sentencing in the name of the black community. So long as one-fourth of the community's young men are under the control of the justice system, "any potential positive contributions they can make to the community will be

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delayed, or lost forever." Perhaps, but "positive contributions" don't seem to be what these particular men have in mind anyway. And if they persist in their negative contributions, the results will rain down mainly on the black community. Most victims of murders, assaults, and rapes committed by blacks are themselves black, and nearly half of black robberies victimize other blacks.

A growing percentage of blacks in the criminal justice system have been put there by the war on drugs, and here the study is not entirely off the mark. It rightly criticizes drug czar William Bennett for taking "a law enforcement approach to a social problem." Bennett's ambition to ferret out drug users wherever they may hide is indeed wrongheaded. Still, blacks (and whites) imprisoned for drug offenses are not, by and large, merely users; even those found guilty of mere possession are typically dealers who get off on a reduced charge.

In fairness, it must be noted that the Sentencing Project doesn't want simply to turn prisoners out on the streets and wish them well. It favors alternative sentencing—restitution to victims, community service, and steering offenders toward drug treatment programs, vocational training, and job placement programs. But even aside from sound doubts about rehabilitative bang per buck, there is a basic problem here. Many of these are services that the government doesn't perform adequately, if at all, for many needy black men who *haven't* committed crimes. Shouldn't they get first dibs? Wouldn't it be a bit perverse to make crime the surest route to a good job, or to treatment for drug dependency?

As almost everyone positioned between the far right and the far left by now understands, the huge disproportion of black convicts is a product not of a deeply flawed criminal justice system but of a deeply rooted social pathology. It is a pathology spawned by centuries of slavery, a subsequent century of officially sanctioned discrimination, further decades of residual bias, and even some well-meaning but misguided paternalism. Also, the very successes of social policy, by distilling the talented, the determined, and the lucky out of the slums, leave behind an ever more potent pathological mixture.

Real healing will take a much bigger commitment of public resources than is now contemplated by any influential politician, notably President Bush. We advocate a program of all-out workfare, in which the government offers vocational training, jobs for those who can't find them, Head Start-caliber child care for working mothers, better public education, better health care, etc., etc.—but in which the government is also coldly willing to withhold public assistance from anyone not willing to work. Once this structure is in place, criminals who have served their time should have the chance to benefit from it like everyone else—and the benefits may indeed be great enough to warrant abbreviating that time. But until Washington finally faces up to the cost of helping the underclass, liberals who insist that the answer is to be nicer to criminals will be obscuring the debate exactly as much as conservatives who insist that the answer is being meaner.

HENRY FAIRLIE

Men come into the world originals and die copies, the eighteenth-century poet Edward Young thought. Well, not all men. Some die originals; and they are usually the ones who were born copies, that is, the ones who come from somewhere, who suckled traditions and therefore never feared them. Henry Fairlie, who died last week, was one of these men. Henry was hard to describe, not least because he didn't wish to be really known. He was a sworn thwarter of categories and clichés. This was not perversity, it was independence. Henry was a genuinely free man, and for that reason, in England and in America, in millions of vivid and rigorous words, he was not only a journalist, he was a clarity artist.

Henry was born in London on January 13, 1924, one of six children of a Scottish farmer who gave up agriculture for journalism. The young Henry's first brush with fame came when he was a schoolboy at London's Highgate School: he was cast as an extra in the 1939 hit movie *Goodbye Mr. Chips*. Thus did the world get its first glimpse of what Henry's British obituarists, over and over again, last week called his "homicidal ploughboy's grin." Turned down for military service because of heart trouble, he read modern history at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, and, in 1945, followed in his father's footsteps to Fleet Street.

By 1950 Henry had gotten a job at *The Times*, then generally acknowledged to be the best newspaper in the world, and he quickly rose to become its principal writer of leaders, or editorials—an unheard-of distinction for a man still in his twenties. *The Times* did not give bylines, but the wit and penetration of Henry's political writing won him the regard of politicians, his fellow journalists, and other insiders.

In 1954 he joined *The Spectator*, and his renown went public. The most famous article he ever wrote for that journal—or any other—was a 1955 column that literally made the phrase "the Establishment" part of the language. To quote the Oxford English Dictionary quoting "H. FAIRLIE": "By 'the Establishment' I do not mean only the centres of official power—though they are certainly part of it—but rather the whole matrix of official and social relations within which power is exercised." The OED's anonymous lexicographer adds: "Quot. 1955"—Henry's column—"is the *locus classicus* for this modern sense though occasional earlier uses are recorded."

In his thirties, at *The Spectator*, Malcolm Muggeridge's *Punch*, the *Daily Mail*, and many other papers, Henry made a brilliant mark on British journalism. He wrote from twenty-one countries—increasingly, from America. He had mastered his craft, but his heedlessness and his uncontrollable charm were buying him no end of trouble. In 1966—hounded by debt, by amatory chaos, and by a libel suit arising from an injudi-

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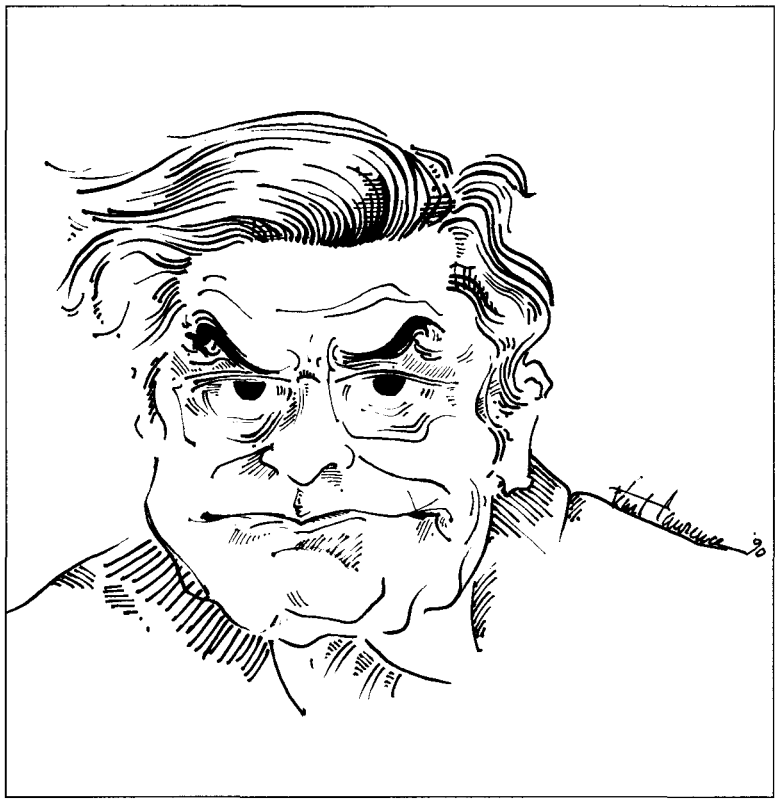
cious remark he had made about Antonia Fraser on a BBC talk show—he crossed the Atlantic, never to return.

Here in Washington he wrote for audiences in both his old country and his adopted one, bringing to his reports and essays on American political and social life qualities rarely found in a single writer and even more rarely found in a writer of journalistic ephemera: historical erudition, seriousness (even solemnity) of purpose, critical sympathy, uproarious humor, utter fearlessness in polemic and argument. He wrote several notable books—*The Life of Politics*, *The Kennedy Promise*, *The Spoiled Child of the Western World*, *The Parties*, *The Seven Deadly Sins Today*—and spent the advances for several more.

Henry spent the last fifteen years of his life writing mostly for, and almost always at, THE NEW REPUBLIC. There were occasional partial hiatuses: in the late 1970s he contributed a weekly column, "Fairlie At Large," to *The Washington Post*'s Outlook section, and for most of 1981 he wrote a weekly piece for his old London newspaper, *The Times*—an arrangement that was abruptly terminated when he devoted his column to a stinging attack on the paper's proprietor, Rupert Murdoch. It was not for nothing that he chose as the title of his projected memoir of his life as a free-lancer, *Bite the Hand that Feeds You*.



HENRY FAIRLIE BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

The hundreds of articles, essays, and reviews he wrote for this magazine were never less than good. Very many of them were among the finest ever published here. To us, his colleagues and co-workers, his presence in our offices was as important as his presence in our pages. He was, in fact, a kind of genie in the office, the man who fell to THE NEW REPUBLIC and brought magic with him, the house rememberer, the sudden scold at the conference table who returned us to first principles. To this city of résumés, Henry gave resonance. He knew the difference between pieces and books, between opinions and ideas, between news and history. And this man who conceived "the Establishment" taught his colleagues to worry a little about their thralldom to elites, to resist the fascination with power and train their gaze upon the people in whose name it is wielded, to think democratically about life in this democracy.

There is an old tradition of British lovers of America, of English writers casting light upon this colony-turned-superpower; but none of them loved America more than Henry, and few of them cast as much light. For Henry, America held out the prospect of newness, of second and third chances, of wisdom *and* youth, of mass decency, of the triumph of politics over society, of a great release from those survivals of the past that did not deserve to be taken into the future. About the United States, Henry was a sentimental slob. Still, his sentimentality was based on a view of human nature. Henry believed that goodness is real, but that it is besieged; and so he understood that the political system of the United States was a lucky break for goodness. This Tory from Fleet Street worshiped the common man and the common woman in a way that would have made John Bright proud.

A word about Henry's conservatism. It was not the kind that resists modernity, or the kind that finds justice in privilege and freedom in money, or the kind that longs for God and his special assistants to rule. And conservatism as an attitude—piety about the past, indeed all forms of absolute certainty—filled Henry with scorn. He was not against change; he was against needless change, stupid change, cruel change. He revered government even as he railed against governments. He cherished the durability of the ordinary institutions of our lives, precisely because he understood the inevitability of the pressures that they face. He insisted that power brings responsibility, not least abroad; and though he hated war, he knew that there are things worth dying for. In nineteenth-century England, Henry would have been called "liberal-conservative." In twentieth century Washington, he was called "unpredictable." We live in a culture that has trouble with people who seem not to add up.

Not only the pages of this magazine will be poorer now. Henry was, as an old colleague wrote last week in a moving obituary in the *Daily Telegraph*, "quite simply the best political journalist, writing in English, of the last half century." And he was one of the last tribunes of a tougher, richer, grander time. We will miss him more than we can say. Oh, once more to feed the hand that bit us!

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A Fairlie Sampler

The press (in which I include television news, except when I distinguish between them) has grown too interested in itself, and I am well aware that criticism of it by a journalist is as much a form of self-absorption as any other. The press now regards itself as a celebrity, even as many individual journalists see themselves as celebrities. In the current issue of *Harper's*, Lewis H. Lapham writes about what James Reston wrote about what the press wrote about the Hanafis, and here am I writing about what Lewis Lapham wrote about what James Reston wrote . . .

Great fleas have little fleas
Upon their backs to bite 'em;
And little fleas have lesser fleas
And so ad infinitum.

It is as well to admit, as one takes up the posture of a critic, that one is somewhere, wherever others may choose to place one, in the hierarchy of fleadom.

But it is my own observation—shared by others—that the American public is getting tired of the presumption of the American press at this moment: at the power and the privileges, the rights and the immunities, to which it today lays claim. Some years ago, when he was prime minister of Great Britain, Stanley Baldwin was being viciously attacked by the press barons, Lord Rothermere and Lord Beaverbrook, and at last he counterattacked with one scorching remark, which is said to have been supplied to him by his cousin, Rudyard Kipling. The press lords, he said, were claiming "power without responsibility, the prerogative of the harlot through the ages." The American press is today claiming the harlot's prerogative.

("The Harlot's Prerogative," April 30, 1977)

Men are less serious than women, it has often been said. Women are more grave—for one thing, they grow older more painfully, which has nothing to do with vanity—valuing reality more. As the mere begetters of new life, men think that the world can easily be made and remade, by a toss of their prowess. But as the bearers of new life, women have their eyes fixed on reality, on what is here and now, what can be relied on to succor and enfold. This women's attention to reality fascinates men, and it often drives them up the wall. Almost every day-to-day irritation of men at women is a complaint against their turning aside to give attention to some reality. This is what lies at the root of the war of the sexes, which is not some trivial engagement, but a profound and unending struggle between two approaches to life. Men fight with women to resist the overwhelming bearing down of reality on our lives, and women fight with men to give moment to the reality whose mystery they perceive more clearly and guard more fiercely.

("The Real Life of Women," August 26 & September 2, 1978)

"Fairlies don't cry," my mother told me. Even when I was a small boy growing up in London and my father arrived home dead in a taxi, my tears had to be contained until I was among my friends at school. I was therefore all the more surprised when, a few years later, on the morning of April 13, 1945, she came into my bedroom with tears of her own. She had to wake me, a lazy undergraduate on vacation. "Mr. Roosevelt is dead!" she announced, and added, choking, "It's on the wireless!" I can remember no other occasion when I saw my mother weep. I did not again see a Briton cry at the death of an American until November 22, 1963.

FDR's voice was known not only in America but across the world. The main image I recall from those years is of the radio set in people's homes. It was not only in occupied Europe that people had to huddle round their sets, lest the gestapo discover them listening to the BBC's broadcasts. My memory is of huddling round the set even in Britain and in peacetime. Radio sets then were not very powerful, and there was always static. Families had to sit near the set, with someone always fiddling with the knobs. It was like sitting round a hearth, with someone poking the fire; and to that hearth came the crackling voices of Winston Churchill, of George Burns and Gracie Allen, and of FDR. The fireside chats, we need to remember, were radio talks. It was not FDR who was at his fireside—the mistake Jimmy Carter made on television—it was we who were at our firesides.

From across the Atlantic, Roosevelt came to our firesides, a friend. It is as a friend across the seas that I remember him. Not only during the war, but even, when I was only a boy, before it. If he was giving money to the unemployed in America, he would give pocket-money to me in England. Generous-hearted—one could tell that from his voice—and trustworthy. It is hard to convey what his voice meant to us in London, second only to Churchill's, as Britain stood alone and the bombs rained down. If Churchill's was the voice of resistance, Roosevelt's was the voice of hope. It was during the darkest days in Britain that Churchill pointed across the Atlantic: "But westward, look, the land is bright."

("The Voice of Hope," January 27, 1982)

One spring day, shortly after my arrival [in America], I was walking down the long, broad street of a suburb, with its sweeping front lawns (all that space), its tall trees (all that sky), and its clumps of azaleas (all that color). The only other person on the street was a small boy on a tricycle. As I passed him, he said, "Hi!"—just like that. No four-year-old boy had ever addressed me without an introduction before. Yet here was this one, with his cheerful "Hi!" Recovering from the culture shock, I tried to look down stonily at his flaxen head, but instead, involuntarily, I found myself saying in return: "Well—hi!" He pedaled off, apparently satisfied. He had begun my Americanization.

"Hi!" As I often say—for Americans do not realize it—the word is a democracy. (I come from a country where one can tell someone's class by how they say "Hallo!" or "Hello!" or "Hullo," or whether they say it at all.) But anyone can say "Hi!" Anyone does. Shortly after my encounter with the boy, I called on the then Suffragan Bishop of Washington. Did he greet me as the Archbishop of Canterbury would have done? No. He said, "Hi, Henry!" I put it down to an aberration, an excess of Episcopalian latitudinarianism. But what about my first meeting with Lyndon B. Johnson, the President of the United States, the Emperor of the Free World, before whom, like a Burgher of Calais, a halter round my neck, I would have sunk to my knees, pleading for a loan for my country? He held out the largest hand in Christendom, and said, "Hi, Henry!"

("Why I Love America," July 4, 1983)

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Between about 3 a.m. and 6 a.m. the life of the city is civil. Occasionally the lone footsteps of someone walking to or from work echo along the sidewalk. All work that has to be done at those hours is useful—in bakeries, for example. Even the newspaper presses stop turning forests into lies. Now and then a car comes out of the silence and cruises through the blinking traffic lights. The natural inhabitants of the city come out from damp basements and cellars. With their pink ears and paws, sleek, well-groomed, their whiskers combed, rats are true city dwellers. Urban life, during the hours when they reign, is urbane.

These rats are social creatures, as you can tell if you look out on the city street during an insomniac night. But after 6 a.m., the two-legged, daytime creatures of the city begin to stir; and it is they, not the rats, who bring the rat race. You might think that human beings congregate in large cities because they are gregarious. The opposite is true. Urban life today is aggressively individualistic and atomized. Cities are not social places.

("The Idiocy of Urban Life," January 5 & 12, 1987)

It is totally plausible that Churchill planned his own funeral; it was, after all, the most gorgeous display of pageantry this side of a coronation. Surely nobody but Churchill could have thought that his body should be taken by barge, like a Tudor sovereign, from a pier near to St. Paul's Cathedral to a pier near to Waterloo Station, where it would be borne by train to the Marlborough burial plot at Blenheim. In the event, however, the most heraldic feature of this departure was none of Churchill's doing. As the barge progressed down the Thames, the dockside cranes all dipped as it passed. The sight of these bowing cranes moved a nation (and me) to tears. For dockers, stevedores, are a nation's most Bolshie workers. In Britain, certainly, none of them ever could have voted for Winston Churchill. Yet they, these proud proletarians, by their own bidding, on a day off, lowered their cranes like guardsmen making an arch of their swords over the passing of a monarch.

(Review of *Never Despair: Winston S. Churchill, 1945-1965* by Martin Gilbert, December 26, 1988)

If TNR were to choose a Man or Woman of the Year for its cover, my nomination for 1988 would be the five nuns of the Discalced Carmelites of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel in Morris Township, New Jersey, who this fall barricaded themselves in their monastery in protest against the introduction of modern comforts to their cloistered life. The worldly distractions against which they revolted, all introduced by Mother Teresa Hewitt since she took over the monastery a year ago, include "television, newspapers, radio, snacks, and a high-tech lighting system in the chapel," according to the Catholic journal *Crisis*. These nuns are the sanest people of whom I have read all year, joyful models for us in this season of universal gorging and gouging. They are simply saying that they do not wish to clutter their lives. I never stroll through a shopping mall without observing that the display of goods includes almost none of the necessities of life. Shoes, we may think, are necessary; but then, of course, the *Discalced* Carmelites go unshod. The gross national product in America now feeds a gross national appetite for the conspicuous consumption of vanities. The nuns are speaking to us. Perhaps it is the society as a whole that needs to take a vow of poverty.

In the last two decades one product that has come to be conspicuously and ravenously consumed is paper, and no city has a more voracious maw for it than Washington. This office is not alone in now having a nerve center that houses three gadgets: a copier; the printer for the word processors; and what is called a FAX, the silliest toy for adults yet invented. No nun would believe how much paper these machines spew forth in a day. It is no coincidence that the noise made by these machines is a chatter; the FAX even begins to chatter to itself in the middle of the night. On a much larger scale this is going on all over Washington. Why should the nuns not close their ears to the chatter that distracts us? As they might point out, things were said much more clearly when Moses had to carve the Ten Commandments on tablets of stone. In place of the printout machine and the FAX, in the new year, let us substitute slabs of granite and a chisel.

(Washington Diarist, "Merry FAXmas," January 2, 1989)

In this political capital, the whole debate about politics, and therefore the activity of government, is askew. It is now barely possible for an intelligent person to join either of them. The core of our concern should not be "big" government or strong government—both of which I favor—but meddling government. Today's "conservatives" are proving themselves the meddlers. It is under the present conservative rage that government is incited and licensed to interfere in our most private choices—our morals, our consumption, our bedrooms. We used to raise our hands in horror at the Cultural Revolution in China, when friends and even family informed on women who used cosmetics. But America too is becoming a nation of informers. We are encouraged to go around checking on everyone else's eating, drinking, smoking, sexual proclivities, and general hygiene. We are being Kooped up by a man in a service uniform whose credentials for his meddling pronouncements are not persuasive, and who has as much arrogance as an army general trying to drill the civilian population. Another man in uniform, this one at the FDA, swept not only grapes but other perfectly good fruit off the supermarket shelves. Why could we not be left to decide for ourselves whether to take the risk of eating the grapes—or of eating the apples, about whose Alar the consumer groups have gotten us unduly alarmed? We can make a start by refusing to fiddle with our clocks and watches at the behest of the government. A nation will not long be free if its people do not have a whiff of anarchy in their spirit.

Among the most tedious of the meddlers are the contemporary breed of First Ladies, who now always take up Causes, mostly meddling. The last genuine contribution by a First Lady was made by Lady Bird Johnson, who went around scattering spring bulbs all over Washington (which are still there, obeying the movement of the sun). Barbara Bush may not be as detestable as Nancy Reagan, but she is bidding fair to become the biggest public bore in the nation. As for those White House puppies, they should have been drowned at birth. I would have volunteered for the job.

(Washington Diarist, "Hushed Puppies," April 24, 1989)

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NOTEBOOK

POLL HACKS: Perhaps they should run a warning whenever Peter Jennings discusses an election on ABC's evening news. Five days before the Nicaraguan vote, ABC trumpeted its poll showing Ortega winning by sixteen percent. Jennings didn't note that supporters of the opposition might have been reluctant to be honest with an interviewer. But the Ortega-victory scoop was only the latest abuse. During the 1988 American presidential election, on the night before the final Bush-Dukakis debate, Jennings devoted almost half of his newscast to the results of a "comprehensive" fifty-state poll ABC had "just conducted." As with the Nicaraguan poll, ABC's motive was to grab attention for itself by, in effect, declaring the election over. Jennings's hype of the Bush-Dukakis poll distracted from the debate. It's not as if everyone didn't know Dukakis was behind. Jennings's coverage was so unfair that even Lee Atwater, Bush's campaign manager, said the poll was "the most devastating thing of the whole campaign" for the Democrats. It later turned out that contrary to Jennings's claims, some of ABC's polling data had been three weeks old and the samples in many states had been too tiny to be meaningful.

SUCH A BOER: It's natural for Jesse Jackson to have visions of apartheid swimming around his head after his trip to South Africa, but he ought to keep the absurd comparisons down to a tolerable level. Recently, when Maryland Governor Donald Schaefer offered to annex the disfranchised District of Columbia, Jackson responded with the accusation that Schaefer was trying to imitate South Africa's racist homelands policy. "As we end Bantustans in South Africa, we do not want to transfer them to Washington," he said at a press conference. Jackson prefers statehood for D.C., so he can become a senator without really trying. But that doesn't make anyone who has a different idea a slave trader.

Bush and Baker drool for a deal.

GETTING TO YES

By Morton Kondracke

The minute the word "yes" flashes from Jerusalem, the Bush administration plans to set a blitz in motion. Within a week Secretary of State James Baker will call a conference in Washington with the foreign ministers of Egypt and Israel. Baker may visit Cairo at the end of an upcoming trip to Africa. And, perhaps as soon as the end of the month, the first-ever face-to-face official peace dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians will take place. The administration will declare this a major diplomatic breakthrough. At last it will have a foreign policy triumph not attributable to the vision of Mikhail Gorbachev.

Twice within ten days Bush's Mideast diplomatic team thought the "yes" from Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir was on its way. Leaving town on February 23, Foreign Minister Moshe Arens had told Baker that he thought Israel would accept U.S. proposals for talks with Palestinians. On March 3 Israeli television reported that a "yes" was coming. Baker and the administration's other top Mideast hands could almost taste the victory: after months of being ridiculed for conducting slow-motion indirect talks that would lead, at best, only to direct talks about elections that would lead to more talks, they would have something tangible to show for their efforts: the first successful American Middle East peace endeavor since Camp David eleven years ago.

In the Bush team's mental timetable, wrangling over election arrangements and the bigger question—what would Palestinian representatives be elected to do?—would last for some months, but the actual voting would occur this year. Final agreements might not be reached by 1992, but as he runs for re-election, Bush could claim to have set the peace process in motion and perhaps could point to some interim agreements on Arab autonomy.

If and when this comes off, even with Israel's "yes" as a starter, the administration actually will deserve some glory. The Mideast still will be far from real peace, of course. But "yes" would represent a painstakingly arrived-at plateau. For almost a year the team of Baker, his policy planning chief Dennis Ross, and National Security Council staffer Richard Haass, plus State Department officials Aaron Miller and Dan Kurtzer and NSC aide David Welch, have been shaving the differences between Israel and the Arabs—mainly in Israel's favor—to produce face-to-face talks. Administration officials say their most imaginative assistance has come from Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin, with added input from Cabinet Secretary Eli Rubenstein, Egyptian Foreign Minister Esmat Abdel-Meguid, and presidential foreign affairs adviser Osama el-Baz.

The result is a variation on a proposal originally developed by Rabin in 1987 and put forward by Shamir last May for Palestinian elections leading to talks with Israel about autonomy and final disposition of the Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967. Israel refuses to talk to the Palestine Liberation Organization, so the Bush team and Egypt have won the PLO's agreement to back out of direct participation and to stop demanding as a precondition Israeli agreement to an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. Israel has

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agreed to talk with Palestinians known to be associated with the PLO, although interminable haggling has gone on over whether activists deported from the West Bank and Arab residents of East Jerusalem (which Israel has annexed) can participate in elections and talks. Rabin, who visited Washington on January 17 and 18, is said to have had a strong hand in drafting the ambiguous compromise proposals that Baker and Company thought Shamir would accept.

But new hitches have developed, blocking the way to "yes." The most important is a crisis within Shamir's Likud party that goes beyond the regular super-hard-line anti-Shamir triumvirate of Ariel Sharon, David Levy, and Yitzhak Modai. Shamir has encountered doubts from younger members of his own midright faction, including Benny Begin, son of Menachem, and Arens's protégé, former United Nations ambassador Benjamin Netanyahu. On a visit to Washington in late February, Netanyahu accused the Bush administration of trying to push Israel "salami-style" into talks with the PLO. "The question is, how to disguise it—how to get Shamir blindfolded and to hold his nose so he can't see it or smell it."

Netanyahu alleged that the administration has in mind the creation of a demilitarized PLO state that inevitably would be used as a launching pad for rocket attacks and terrorism against Israel. Netanyahu, who is now Arens's deputy, got himself quoted in the Israeli press undercutting his boss's diplomatic efforts. Back home, he submitted his resignation, but Arens—though supposedly furious with Netanyahu—refused to accept it. Netanyahu was invited by Sharon to join his faction of Likud, but refused. Israeli government officials and journalists think that Netanyahu pulled a bad political maneuver, isolating himself in the party, but it's evidence of the trouble Shamir faced in Likud.

To his left, meanwhile, Shamir has been handed an ultimatum by Labor party leader Shimon Peres: accept the American proposal or I will pull out of the government, deprive you of the prime ministership, form my own government along with the ultra-Orthodox religious party, Shas, and negotiate with the Palestinians without you. Ousted from power, Shamir might just lose control of Likud and be forced to retire. Sharon, rather than Arens, might well succeed him.

Meanwhile, Bush complicated Shamir's life even further by unaccountably raising the issue of Jewish control of East Jerusalem. Bush is adamantly against expansion of Jewish settlements in the West Bank. Reportedly he is also sensitive to fears expressed by Jordan's King Hussein that Jewish émigrés from the Soviet Union will settle in the West Bank and Jerusalem and drive out Arabs, who will then settle in his kingdom and cause him trouble.

In a press conference otherwise devoted to U.S.-Japan trade, Bush called for a halt to Jewish settlements in both the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Israelis immediately took this as a threat to their sovereignty over the city. Bush's 1988 Republican Party platform declared that Jerusalem should never again be divided and should remain Israel's capital, but suddenly Bush seemed to be questioning the right of Israelis to live where they want in the city, despite the fact that 100,000 Jews already live in Arab sectors. Administration officials say this is no change in U.S. policy, and that Bush's statement was prompted by the fact that ten percent of new immigrants from the Soviet Union are settling in parts of Jerusalem formerly under Arab control.

Partly in response to Bush, Likud rightists proposed a potential killer condition on Israeli acceptance of the U.S. peace proposal: East Jerusalem Arabs would be forbidden to vote or run in eventual Palestinian elections. If sustained, that position would prevent key Palestinian leaders such as Faisal Husseini and Sari Nusseibeh from running for office. The Palestinians would reject that condition and so would Labor.

Administration officials think they can finesse the East Jerusalem issue, as they have before, but well-informed Israeli journalists expect a new potential glitch to develop: a demand by Palestinian negotiators to be formally blessed (though not appointed) by PLO chief Yasir Arafat. The Palestinians would do this for their own protection, to lessen the chances they might be attacked by more radical PLO factions or disavowed even by Arafat. A public endorsement from Arafat well might drive Israel yet further away from "yes."

And finally there is the issue of West Bank terrorism. In Washington Netanyahu asserted Israel has evidence that brutal murders of so-called Arab "collaborators" actually are being ordered by the PLO against potential independent thinkers in order to maintain PLO discipline in the population. Deaths at the hands of Arab enforcers now outnumber intifada killings by Israeli troops two-to-one. Baker told Congress that no evidence exists linking Arafat to the killings and that, so far as he knows, Arafat is maintaining his pledge to desist from terrorist activities. Still, the killings have done nothing to win sympathy for the Arabs from the Israeli population, which ultimately will decide whether to yield control of the territories.

In spite of that, the Bush administration thinks the Israelis ought to follow South Africa and Eastern Europe in taking a fresh look at its fundamental political situation. Administration officials deny the claim that they have in mind a PLO-run West Bank state. They say they do not know what's at the end of the negotiating process they are trying to nurse along. They are getting impatient for it to get started, however. "The room is waiting. The furniture has been set. It's time to meet," one official said. If Israel does not say "yes," the administration says, it will busy itself elsewhere—with South Africa and Eastern Europe—and let the Soviet Union and others take up Middle East peace. It's politely stated, but that's a threat. •

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PRESIDENT'S PYGMY

By Fred Barnes

Transportation Secretary Sam Skinner is the George Bush clone in the Cabinet. "I'm no ideologue, but I'm a pretty conservative fellow," Skinner says. Bush could say the same. Skinner is an activist who believes in government. So is Bush. Skinner is willing to use all the regulatory power he's got (he imposed tough new auto emission standards), but isn't seeking more. Ditto Bush. Skinner, 51, is gregarious (he threw parties for political appointees at Transportation and danced with all the women). He is zealous in courting Congress (he invited representatives and senators with pilot's licenses to a special breakfast). And he is a pal and supporter of Vice President Dan Quayle. When the veep invited Skinner to the Indy 500 last year, he began the phone conversation, "Vroooom. Vroooom. Vroooom." At the race, Skinner rode in the pace car with Quayle.

Skinner has Bush's problem: good intentions, not enough money. On March 8 Skinner went to the White House so he and Bush could unveil "a statement of national transportation policy, a strategy for action." Skinner believes in "MBO," management by objective. He devoted months to devising ambitious objectives for the nation's transportation system and packaging them in an impressive document. Skinner recognizes the threat that America's congested roads and airports pose to economic growth, international competitiveness, and a people-friendly environment. He stresses the staples—highways and airports—and also makes the case for innovative approaches such as private toll roads and high-tech solutions such as bullet trains. But again and again in the policy statement, he warns that federal funds are scarce and can't pay for everything.

"Estimates of future transportation investment needs vary widely," the document says, "but all of them exceed current levels of spending." Skinner characterizes the federal role as that of a "catalyst," sometimes providing "seed money." He says, "The measure of our federal policies will lie in their success in unleashing private resources and using public resources most efficiently to meet society's needs." Of course, the gasoline tax could be increased. But Bush opposes that. When Skinner was asked about raising taxes on January 10, he said the questioner should check with the White House to find his position. A tax hike is always "an open option," he told me, "but that's not our policy now."

New taxes aren't a problem for Skinner's plans for expanding airports. His department forecasts that thirty-three airports (all the major urban ones) will experience more than 20,000 hours of delays in 1997. That's a conservative estimate. To pay for airport expansion, the new Bush budget proposes to raise the ticket tax from the current eight percent to ten percent and to allow local airports to levy passenger facility charges. But Washington won't be as generous as Skinner suggests in the example he cites in his policy document. That's Alliance Airport in Fort Worth, Texas, a project of billionaire Ross Perot that opened last December. It cost $250 million and is used for private planes and freight. The airport got $34 million in federal money. "It was a kind of demonstration project," says Skinner. "I would not be able to do that for every airport of that type."

Highways will get even shorter shrift. The interstate highway system is practically completed, and money from the current federal gas tax is being used to maintain it. What about expanding the system? Sorry, there's no money for that. I asked Skinner about a new ring road around Washington, an outer beltway as a bypass for interstate travelers. It's badly needed, but Skinner isn't about to finance it at the ninety percent federal, ten percent state ratio used for the interstate system. Ring roads generate development, he says, and those who benefit from it should share the road's cost. Officials at the Office of Management and Budget argue that seventy percent or so of traffic on ring roads is local. Ergo, locals should pay seventy percent of the road's cost. The trouble is that the Washington bypass—or any major road—will never be built.

Skinner has thrown his exuberant salesmanship behind private toll roads. In his introduction to the policy document he says, "There is significant potential for increased private sector involvement in transportation, including owning and operating toll roads and transit. . . ." Skinner often touts the privately financed toll road between Dulles International Airport and Leesburg, Virginia, on which construction will begin this year. But his national strategy doesn't include incentives for toll roads. To prompt states to cut the speed limit and curb drunken drivers, the spur was more federal highway money. "We haven't gotten that far yet" in promoting private toll roads, Skinner says. "We should probably do that."

He has plenty of time to add it to his agenda. Congress won't deal with reauthorization of the highway program until 1991. My guess is Skinner will, if he tries, get the administration at least to go along. He has friends in high places—not only Bush but also budget director Richard Darman and John Sununu, the White House chief of staff. Skinner first encountered Bush in 1979. GOP Governor James Thompson of Illinois hosted a dinner for Bush in Springfield and invited his friend Skinner, then an attorney in Chicago. "At my table was Jim Baker," recalls Skinner. A few days later Baker called him and set up a session between Skinner and Bush. "I just liked Bush's style," says Skinner. "He's very unassuming, a very decent human being." Skinner became the Bush coordinator in Illinois in the 1980

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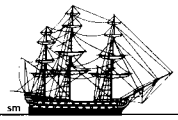

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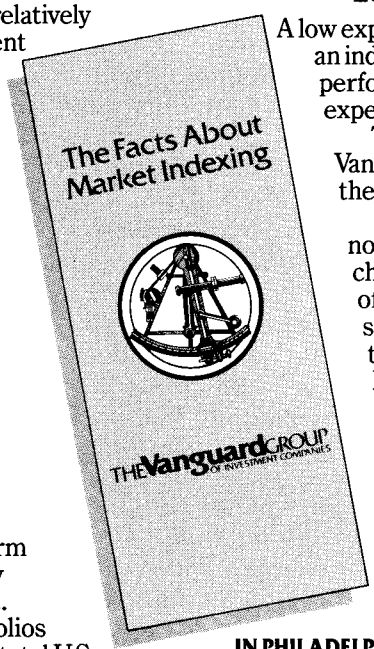

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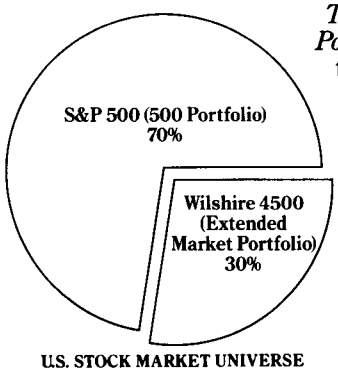

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Republican presidential race.

In the 1988 campaign Thompson was Bush's nominal chairman in Illinois. "Sam was our real state chairman, our real operative," says a White House official. He and Sununu met during the campaign when Sununu, then New Hampshire governor, stumped for Bush in Illinois. They hit it off. "Sununu has confidence in him," says a White House aide. Skinner strengthened his position by defending Sununu's decision that eases restrictions on using wetlands to widen highways and extend airports. Skinner compiled for Sununu a list of dozens of projects jeopardized by the wetlands agreement between the Corps of Engineers and the Environmental Protection Agency, the agreement Sununu eventually overturned. In a speech in Washington on February 22, Skinner zinged Sununu's critics for lacking both "experience in public projects" and "perspective and understanding."

Siding with Sununu fits Skinner's new reputation as a conservative. The initial impression he made in Washington was different. Skinner says this is because "some of the early decisions I had to make were in the regulatory arena, not the policy arena." He issued tougher-than-expected auto emission standards, challenged KLM's bid to buy Northwest Airlines, and questioned the merger of the reservation systems of American and Delta Airlines. "I'm a regulator," Skinner says, but he's not a re-regulator. In February he issued a study that lauded airline deregulation ("more service at lower cost"). In speeches and in his policy statement, Skinner urges efforts to "minimize barriers to private participation in the ownership, planning, financing, construction, maintenance, and management of transportation facilities and services." In January the conservative Heritage Foundation extolled his policies as "sensible" and "welcome." David Prosperi, Skinner's spokesman, now includes Heritage's eleven-page assessment in official press packets.

Skinner's greatest triumph in Washington is Congress. He's probably the most popular member of Bush's Cabinet among Democrats. Schmoozing pays off. He made sure that Representative Norman Mineta of California, chairman of the House subcommittee on surface transportation, got a seat on his plane when he flew to San Francisco as Bush's man at the earthquake last October. He held a farewell reception when Ralph Everett left as the Senate Commerce Committee's chief of staff. Senator Fritz Hollings of South Carolina, the committee chairman, said it was the first time he'd been invited to the transportation secretary's office in nearly twenty years.

Like Bush, Skinner can't continue to please everyone. Soon he must decide whether to pay for a feasibility study of Mayor Richard Daley's proposal to build a new airport in Chicago. Three other Illinois sites have been proposed, and Indiana officials want the airport in Gary. As an Indiana senator, Quayle lobbied for that site. As veep, he still favors it. Quayle has conferred repeatedly with Skinner on the subject. "What's the use of being vice president if you can't put your oar in every so often?" says a Quayle aide. If he copies Bush, Skinner will split the difference and endorse an airport half in Indiana, half in Illinois. Wait and see. •

Mommy's meandering Mideast millions.

JUST SAY DOUGH

By Howard L. Rosenberg and Ellen Ladowsky

"Just say no," Nancy Reagan advised a group of Oakland schoolchildren in 1984. The three-word mantra marked the beginning of her most public campaign—a personal crusade against drug abuse that the now-former First Lady continues to wage through her recently established Nancy Reagan Foundation.

But when it came to accepting money for her anti-drug campaign, it was the First Lady who could not say no to wealthy Arab donors. The Nancy Reagan Drug Abuse Fund (NRDAF), set up in 1985 under the auspices of a Washington, D.C., charity, collected some $3.6 million, the lion's share of which came in gifts from the king of Saudi Arabia and from Arab businessmen while the Reagans were in the White House. When the Reagans moved back to California, the First Lady stripped the petrodollars from the local charity to endow her own namesake foundation.

The strange tale of how Mideast money found its way into Nancy Reagan's foundation begins in September 1984, when the Sultan of Brunei—reputedly the world's richest man—visited New York on the occasion of his country's admission to the United Nations. The Sultan was apparently in a generous mood. At well-publicized events he doled out half a million dollars to New York City's Meals on Wheels program and another half million to the U.N.'s children's relief organization, UNICEF.

The Reagans were also in New York at the time, staying at the Waldorf Astoria, and an informal meeting was arranged. Bob Woodrum, then a public relations adviser to the Sultan, asked White House aides if there was something the Sultan could "do for the Reagans." James Rosebush, then the First Lady's chief of staff, provided a list of Nancy Reagan's favorite charities, including the National Federation of Parents for Drug Free Youth.

The Sultan, a devout Muslim fundamentally opposed to drug and alcohol consumption, chose the Federation for his gift. But before he could visit the Reagans he unexpectedly returned to Brunei, and Woodrum was dispatched to the Waldorf in his place. In a ceremony videotaped for playback on Bruneian television (but never mentioned in the U.S. press) Woodrum handed Nancy Reagan a check made out to the Federation for $500,000.

The cash potential of oil potentates was not lost on the Reagans or their White House aides. They quickly targeted the Sultan for another pet project: In a December 28, 1984, memo to Oliver North, public relations

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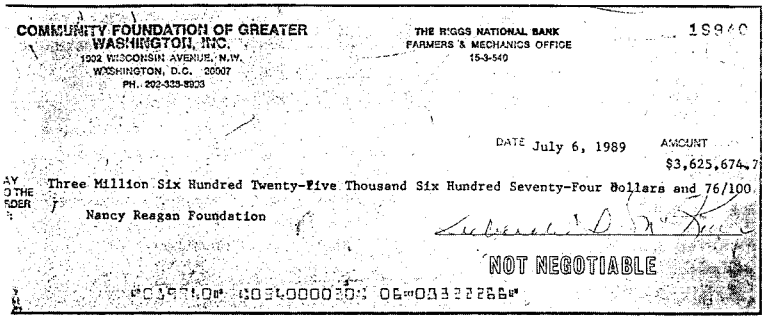
consultant Edie Fraser took note of the Sultan's largess and added, "It has been recommended that he might kick in a million dollars of that for the Refugees for Central America. . . . It would appear to me that if the Nancy Reagan Drug [sic] accepted his generous contribution, we could, also."

In fact, at North's suggestion, the Sultan was later solicited by either Secretary of State George Shultz or Assistant Secretary Elliott Abrams, or both (testimony in the Iran-contra hearings differs on this point), and did indeed "kick in" $10 million for the contras. Unfortunately, in a now-famous moment of confusion, North's secretary, Fawn Hall, transposed the numbers of his secret Swiss bank account, and the Sultan's cash ended up in the hands of a private businessman.

In February 1985 Saudi King Fahd arrived in Washington for his first state visit. The king was interested in pressing Reagan to extract concessions from Israel on a new Middle East accord. He was also eager for the United States to begin delivery of sophisticated AWACS surveillance planes (delayed since the controversial 1981 sale because of U.S. insistence on supervisory rights), and he wanted forty F-15 fighters for his Royal Saudi Air Force. Reagan's aides wanted the king to step up his covert support of the contras.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THE MONEY GOES WEST

The president did push for the fighter sale but was blocked by Congress. The AWACS planes, though, began to be delivered in 1986, and King Fahd—through his nephew and ambassador to the United States, Prince Bandar ibn Sultan—contributed an estimated $32 million for the contras.

Meanwhile, East Wing aides had begun seeking a mechanism by which the First Lady's imprimatur could be used to draw more funds for her anti-drug work. The tax-exempt Community Foundation of Greater Washington was selected to help. (Created in the mid-1970s, the Community Foundation had the endorsement of First Lady Rosalynn Carter and today manages the literacy efforts of First Lady Barbara Bush.) Only a few weeks after the king's visit, the Community Foundation's board of directors adopted a resolution establishing "The Nancy Reagan Drug Abuse Fund." The resolution stipulated that the Fund was "the property of the Foundation," not a trust fund, and that the Community Foundation was to maintain control over grant assignments. In return for using her name to draw donations, the Community Foundation promised that "all contributions from the Fund shall specify that they're being made from the Nancy Reagan Drug Abuse Fund," but Nancy Reagan herself reserved "the right . . . to remove her name from the Fund and to require the immediate cessation of any and all use of her name. . . ." The accounting and legal costs of handling the money were borne by the Community Foundation, which charged the NRDAF a standard one percent service fee.

For the first weeks the NRDAF was a fund in little more than name. Then, on June 27, 1985, the Community Foundation's president at the time, Lawrence Stinchcomb, was summoned to the White House to pick up a check for the NRDAF. It was routine for the First Lady's staff to collect donations from citizens looking to support her anti-drug campaign—a $10 or $20 check here and there and even the poignant piggy-bank proceeds of schoolchildren inspired by her "Just Say No" campaign. But the check Stinchcomb received was far from routine: drawn on a local bank, it was signed by Prince Bandar ibn Sultan in the amount of $1 million. Community Foundation officials were told it was from King Fahd. They were amazed: with one donation to just one of the more than forty different philanthropic organizations they managed, their total assets had increased by almost fifty percent.

Arab businessmen, it seemed, were suddenly taking an extraordinary interest in the drug-abuse problems of American youth. On September 30, 1986, the Community Foundation received a $100,000 gift for the NRDAF. The donor was Mohamed al-Fayed, an Egyptian-born businessman. In late October 1986 Stinchcomb got another White House call and was told to expect to hear from someone who wanted to make a donation to the First Lady's anti-drug efforts. On October 27, 1986, a messenger delivered another check for $1 million. This time the donor was Mouaffak al-Midani, who has a series of electrical power and telecommunications concessions in Saudi Arabia. (The financial dealings of al-Midani, al-Fayed, and the Sultan of Brunei were intertwined once before—at the sale of London's Dorchester Hotel in January 1985: al-Midani was the seller, al-Fayed was the broker, and the Sultan was the buyer.)

During 1987 and '88 the NRDAF endowment drew interest and the First Lady's fight drew more donations. Her annual White House tennis tournaments featuring political, Hollywood, and sports celebrities earned the Fund between $100,000 and $250,000 a year—most of which was handed out on the spot to groups like Just Say No, which forms student anti-drug clubs, and Phoenix House, a national organization of drug treatment centers. The NRDAF's assets grew to more than $3.5 million—more than half of which had come from King Fahd and al-Midani.

In the fall of 1988 the First Lady's chief of staff, Jack Courtemanche, surprised Community Foundation officials when he told them that Nancy Reagan no longer

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wanted them to administer "her" fund. Instead she wanted to take the assets with her to California, where she planned to set up her own charitable foundation. Community Foundation officials found the request unusual but agreed to consider it, even though the terms of their resolution creating the Fund specified that it was the property of the Community Foundation, not the First Lady.

Without waiting for a decision by the Community Foundation, Nancy Reagan pressed ahead with her plans. On December 15, 1988, she wrote to California Secretary of State March Fong Eu, "I have authorized the law firm of Baker and Hostetler to do all things necessary and proper to form a California nonprofit corporation to be known as 'The Nancy Reagan Foundation.'" Four days later the new Foundation's president, former CIA director Richard Helms, filed articles of incorporation citing as its purpose "to conduct and promote educational, charitable, and scientific activities in the campaign against drug and substance abuse. . . ."

By February 1989 the Internal Revenue Service granted the Nancy Reagan Foundation tax-exempt status as a publicly supported organization. Mrs. Reagan's attorney, Richard Hauser, informed the Community Foundation of the exemption by letter on March 7, 1989. Community Foundation officials, still debating the propriety of her unusual request, asked for more information about how the NRF intended to spend its money. "The Nancy Reagan Foundation will support community-based programs in drug abuse education, prevention, and treatment," Mrs. Reagan's California-based attorney, Ira Revich, replied in a May 26, 1989, letter. "The support will consist primarily of grants to programs such as . . . Phoenix House, DARE, and Just Say No." Revich also requested "that the Community Foundation transfer to the Nancy Reagan Foundation the funds held in the Nancy Reagan Drug Abuse Fund in the amount of approximately $4,000,000."

The Community Foundation's directors were split on the issue, but officials later said they had no appetite for a dispute with a former First Lady. And though the money in the Nancy Reagan Drug Abuse Fund was technically the property of the Community Foundation, officials acknowledged that it was the appeal of the First Lady's name that had prompted the donations. Moreover, since the NRF vowed to use the money for the same charitable purposes for which it was contributed, the board finally voted to hand over the cash. On July 6, 1989, a check was cut, and $3,625,674.76 went west.

The same day that Nancy Reagan's attorney wrote to the Community Foundation vowing to underwrite programs such as Phoenix House, her advisers told Phoenix House director Mitch Rosenthal that she had "changed her mind" about sponsoring the Phoenix group's "Nancy Reagan Center" in Los Angeles, because of neighborhood opposition to the treatment facility. Rosenthal, a psychiatrist, wrote to the Center's backers—who had contributed $2.8 million for the project already—to say Nancy Reagan wanted them to have "the opportunity to transfer their gifts to her Foundation." But Rosenthal enclosed another letter with his—from the attorney general of California, saying the "Office would certainly question the legality of" cash refunds. And though Merv Griffin (who kicked in $200,000) and several others asked for a refund from the Phoenix House project, to date no money has been returned to donors.

On February 25, 1989, the Reagans were fêted at a lavish official welcome-home party hosted by al-Midani at his secluded nine-acre estate in Beverly Hills. The choice of the reclusive Arab entrepreneur as party-giver puzzled observers at the time. "I don't know why he was singled out for this," the Reagans' spokesman, Mark Weinberg, told *The Los Angeles Times*. "Nancy Reagan has met him before, but I don't know the circumstances."

For its first eleven months, the new Nancy Reagan Foundation gave away only one $50,000 grant. During that time Nancy Reagan collected $50,000 for the NRF in Japan, and last October the First Annual Nancy Reagan Tennis Tournament raised an estimated $450,000. Then, in a flurry of activity that followed press inquiries, between December 20 and the beginning of this year the NRF made twelve more grants totaling $217,000.

The NRF has an executive director and at least one other professional staff member, Lisa Cavalier, who handles Nancy Reagan's appointments and scheduling and travels with her. The NRF leases office space just down the hall from Ronald Reagan's office in the penthouse of the pricey Fox Plaza building, where the NRF (like the former president's office) pays cut-rate rent. Today, five years after wealthy Arab donors began collaborating with Nancy Reagan to solve America's No. 1 domestic problem, they each have what they wanted. Saudi Arabia has its AWACS planes. Al-Midani has entrée to the Reagan social set. And Nancy Reagan has a personalized foundation in her own back yard, dribbling out occasional grants to showcase her continued dedication to the war on drugs.

In a written response to inquiries from CBS News, Mark Weinberg—who is on the former president's staff payroll, but said he was acting as the NRF's director of public affairs—explained that "Nancy Reagan personally pays the actual cost of any portion of Foundation staff members' salaries and expenses which are not directly attributable to the Foundation's activities." No audit will take place until the Foundation files its tax return next May, and as with all public foundations, the public will only have access to the sketchiest details about the Nancy Reagan Foundation's finances.

And what of the Middle East as a fount of money for her Foundation? "Nancy Reagan thinks," Weinberg wrote, "that the drug problem is a global one and she encourages people from all parts of the world to contribute to the solution."

HOWARD L. ROSENBERG is an investigative reporter and producer for the "CBS Evening News." ELLEN LADOWSKY was a CBS News intern.

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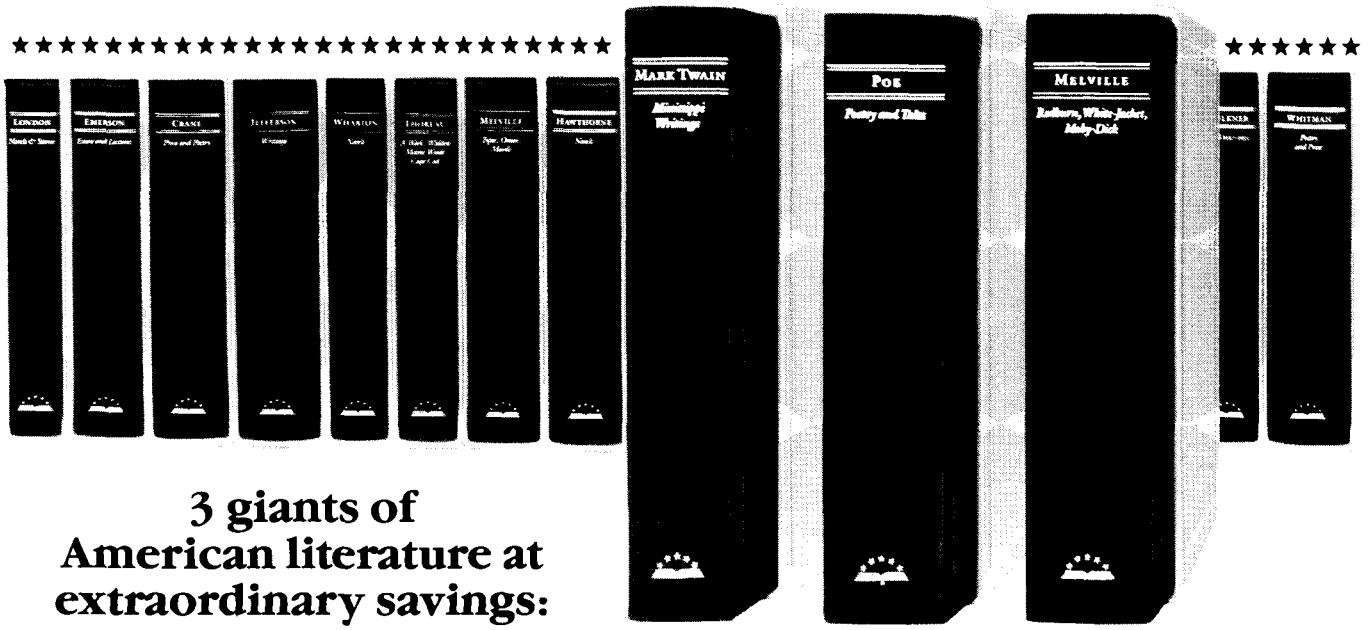

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The Berlin Wall came down too soon.

THE GERMAN REVIVAL

By Charles Krauthammer

> The great intervening parties of modern history, although by no means the only ones, have been the great powers, and a great power is, among other things, a power that cannot be intervened against. . . .
>
> —HEDLEY BULL

Overnight and once again Germany has become a great power. Not for long will it continue to be intervened against. All that is left to negotiate at the coming "two plus four" talks on reunification is the mode of liquidating the Big Four's half-century intervention in Germany. Beyond those negotiations lies the other half of the great power equation: In what ways and to what extent will Germany once again become an intervening power?

German intervention, or, shall we say, German external intentions, are now the major item on the European agenda. Because these intentions are as yet indeterminate, the fear of Germany, once the great subtext of European politics, is now the text. German reunification changes all geopolitical calculations of only a few months ago. It colors plans for the single European market of 1992. It infuses dead organisms, like the Warsaw Pact, with new life. (The Solidarity prime minister of Poland has now asked Soviet troops to stay in his country until the "German problem" is solved.) Most chillingly, it evokes old memories. Who would have thought that we would live to see, again, a headline reading: "POLISH OFFICIAL VOWS TO DEFEND [German] BORDER" (*The New York Times*, February 21)?

Anxiety about Germany is so pervasive and seems so self-explanatory that it often escapes analysis. What exactly is the nature of the German danger? The answer presents itself in three distinct parts: military, economic, and political. The first two have been widely advertised and widely exaggerated. The third, the subtle effect German reunification will have in the realm of geopolitical ideas and institutions, is apt to prove the most serious.

I. MILITARY

At the most concrete level, the fear of Germany has to do with borders. Much territory was stripped from Germany to punish it for starting World War II, and to diminish it as a hedge against World War III. With a reunified Germany dominating the continent, with Russia and America having gone home, who will stop Germany when it invokes a statute of limitations on World War II and demands restoration to its former, pre-Hitler self?

(That demand would not be without logic. The Arabs lost the West Bank in a war of aggression in 1967, yet the world seems unanimous in believing they have a right to get it back. If the "inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force" applies to the West Bank, a territory lost in a war of aggression and now kept as a buffer zone by the aggressors' would-be victim, why should Germans be denied the same right to their lost provinces of Silesia, Pomerania, and East Prussia? These, too, were lost in a war of aggression. These, too, the would-be victims, Poland and Russia, want to keep as buffer zones. By what right?)

Europeans, with memories of the Wehrmacht crisscrossing the continent, fear for their borders. If that fear is paranoia, then we must count Lech Walesa, Mikhail Gorbachev, most people in between, and much of Western Europe, too, as paranoid. Political philosopher Johnny Carson put it best. "The Berlin Wall is down," he noted the day after the event. "That means that all Germans are now free to go wherever they want in Europe. Hey, wasn't that the problem back in 1939?"

When the "two plus four" process is over and ratified by the thirty-five Helsinki countries at the end of this year, Germany will no doubt be required as the price for reunification to pledge adherence in perpetuity to its current borders. Yet no one can be absolutely sure that Germany ten or twenty years from now will not dismiss this agreement as the relic of a weakness long passed, as it did the Versailles agreements in the 1930s.

At the root of this fear of German revanchism lies the German national character, or more precisely, the belief in a German national character. The fear is that left to themselves Germans will revert to Teutonic barbarism, that German romanticism—the peculiarly fevered romanticism of the worker bee—will again seek fateful expression in politics and history. Beside this fear, forty years of democracy, forty years of peaceful accommodation to neighbors—in short, forty years of history—count for little.

One cannot definitively disprove this fear. How does one prove the negative proposition that Germans do

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not suffer from some peculiar character defect that inclines them toward expansion and aggression? One can only say that invoking national character as an explanatory principle or predictive device should always be cause for skepticism. The psychological interpretation of nations is even more unreliable than the psychological interpretation of individuals, itself a notoriously unreliable enterprise. By this reckoning, how do we account for the fact that the French disposition toward romantic expansionism, which took them all the way to Moscow in 1812, was abruptly banished in 1815?

We account for it as the triumph of history over "character." As Daniel Pipes says, there is no cure for total ambition quite like total defeat. Before there was a German problem, there was the French problem. Waterloo was its solution. Who worries about French national character now? There is no certainty, of course, that the German problem was solved in 1945 as surely as the French problem was solved in 1815. But the last forty years of German history cannot be so easily dismissed. (And security guarantees, such as a continued American presence on the continent, should provide sufficient reassurance until the new Germany has the time to demonstrate that it is indeed heir to the Federal Republic and not to more archaic German forms.)

II. ECONOMIC

The more realistic fear of the new Germany is economic and, as a result, cultural. As Rita Klimová, the new Czech ambassador to the United States, said recently, "The German-speaking world"—by which she meant the two Germanys and Austria—"will now achieve what the Hapsburgs, Bismarck, and Hitler failed to achieve: the Germanization of Central Europe." She added, "Through peaceful and laudable means, of course. And by the logic of commerce rather than conquest." Her point was clear. The dynamism of German commerce is already being felt in the weak economies of Eastern Europe. Czech schools, she explained, had just abolished Russian as the second language. The only question now was whether the new second language would be English or German. She urged the United States to send English teachers.

Eastern Europe fears outright domination by the German dynamo. Western Europe—Britain and France in particular—fear eclipse. This will be an economy of 80 million people producing fully forty percent of the European Community's gross domestic product. As the economic powerhouse of the continent, it will dictate policy to its neighbors even more powerfully than it does today.

One can understand the origin of these fears without granting them undue respect. The fear of being outcompeted by a peaceful commercial republic operating on fairly equal terms is a fear of which a nation ought not be proud. It characterizes, for example, the rather hysterical and occasionally racist American hostility toward Japan. German economic domination of the continent may be an injury to the pride of the British and the French. And the spread of German automobile manuals may be unwelcome to Czechs and Poles. But neither development constitutes a menace to anyone's standard of living (in market systems, prosperity is not a zero-sum game), or a threat to anyone's national existence, or an argument against German reunification.

III. POLITICAL

What then is the real problem with German reunification? It will reverse one of the most salutary European developments of the last fifty years: the decline of sovereignty. German reunification will constitute the most dramatic rebirth of sovereignty in the postwar era. In this era, Europe has enjoyed a historically unprecedented period of peace largely because the sovereignty of its warring nations was suppressed, brutally in the East and benignly in the West, by the advent of two great empires. Whatever else it did, the cold war division of Europe into a pax Sovietica and pax Americana did have the virtue of suppressing internecine European conflict.

But the imperial suppression of sovereignty must be temporary. Empire is not forever. Hence the post-cold war question: How to remove the artificial suppression of sovereignty by the superpowers, without then risking the national explosions that follow almost universally—in our time, in Asia and Africa—whenever the imperial power withdraws? Western Europe thought it had found the answer. Over the last forty years it has gradually built up transnational institutions, most notably the European Community. The great project accelerating toward completion was the formation of the single European market by 1992 that would transform the economies of the Twelve into an economic unit almost as free of legal barriers as that of the United States. Ireland and Greece would trade as freely as Maine and Texas.

But the importance of Europe '92 is not just economic. It involves one of history's greatest peacetime transfers of sovereignty. By giving up enormous economic, social, and regulatory power to a central European authority, the countries of Western Europe are consciously giving up much of their political autonomy. That is precisely why Margaret Thatcher so resists the process. She knows that EC monetary union, for example, may soon lead to a common currency, which will lead further to a common economic policy, which will lead inexorably toward political confederation. Talk of a United States of Europe is premature. But it is not farfetched. That is the trajectory that Western Europe is following.

Or was until November 9, the day the Berlin Wall fell. Europe '92 was to substitute the diminished sovereignty imposed by European integration for the diminished sovereignty once imposed by American domination. It was to be a transition from imperially- to self-imposed community. The great hope was that an integrated Europe would begin to acquire some of the internal stability of a federal country such as the United States. By diminishing the sovereignty of each country and centralizing more and more authority in "Europe," the

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national rivalries that led to centuries of European wars would become obsolete. It would be as if Texas went to war with Maine.

German reunification challenges the idea and derails the process. West Germany, pledged to diminish its sovereignty by joining this single European market, is now about to swallow the East, an incorporation that will augment its population, territory, economy, military strength, political centrality, and diplomatic clout. It is about to become the new giant on the continent. Leave aside potential territorial claims against its neighbors. Leave aside the possibility of Germany acquiring nuclear weapons. The simple fact of the explosive birth of a new and huge Germany in the center of the continent immediately undercuts the entire movement toward European confederation.

Such a Germany is its own confederation. Absent any malice, ill will, or "romanticism" on the part of its leadership, it will necessarily begin to act in accord with its new power—independently and with the kind of assertiveness and regard for distant interests that characterizes the other great powers, notably the United States and the Soviet Union.

The real danger posed by a reunified Germany is not that a new Bismarck or Hitler will arise. It is that the birth of a new giant in the middle of the continent will arrest Europe's great confederational project and produce in its place, as *The Economist* put it, a "revised version of a previously destructive balance-of-power system," a recapitulation of the kind of international system of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that ended in catastrophe.

We can see the new balance-of-power system taking shape already. The shape is disturbingly familiar. The Western European powers are maneuvering to reestablish pre-war links with the ex-Soviet colonies of Eastern Europe, not just in pursuit of economic opportunity, but quite consciously to prevent Germany from dominating the region. Take the Polish question. Britain and France have forcefully supported Poland's demand for German acceptance of the current Polish frontier. Chancellor Helmut Kohl demurs and rejects out of hand Poland's demand for a presence at the coming "two plus four" deliberations. The Poles then seek Soviet assistance on the issue. They now wave the Soviet card—keeping Soviet troops in Poland, on Germany's border—as a warning to Germany to be more accommodating. This pattern is not new.

As the Europeans begin to maneuver to find partners to balance and contain Germany, each country is forced into a kind of reactive nationalism. Margaret Thatcher "is practicing a very narrow brand of nineteenth-century nationalism," complained a West German diplomat to *The Washington Post*. "The danger is that when one country does this, others may be forced to follow." She might reply, We didn't start this. But no matter. Wherever one chooses to place the blame, the result is the same: the movement toward integration, federalization, and dilution of sovereignty is halted. Europe invented the idea of sovereignty, suffered its consequences, and was about to demonstrate how to transcend it. Now Europe is heading back the other way. For a continent consisting of twenty-nine sovereignties speaking forty-five languages, that way is not just an anachronism, it is a prescription for instability.

To be sure, this revival of sovereignty had already begun elsewhere. In Eastern Europe the erosion of Soviet power is already giving rise to reassertions of contentious and conflicting nationalisms. The withdrawing Communists leave behind a myriad of territorial and other grievances and no structure to moderate these conflicts. Not surprisingly, the most advanced case of malignant nationalism can be seen in the place from which Soviet influence was first expelled. Yugoslavia, Eastern Europe's oldest Moscow-free zone, is home to ethnic strife of truly heroic depth and irrationality.

Everyone is aware of the dangers of these revived Eastern and Central European nationalisms. But there was a hope: that a powerfully united Western Europe would draw the Eastern countries into its orbit and that, as they attached themselves individually to this new stable center, their intramural conflicts would be tempered. The key to a pax Europa was to be a deeply integrated European Community: a core confederated Western Europe attracting and taming the newly freed sovereignties of the East.

That was the vision of the new Europe. In fact, it became the very definition of the word. When Vaclav Havel says that he wants Czechoslovakia to "rejoin Europe," he means not just a reunion with Western culture and political tradition, but something very concrete as well. He means joining the enterprise launched by the European Twelve and institutionalized in the framework of the European Community. He means the Council of Ministers in Brussels, the Parliament in Strasbourg, the Court of Justice in Luxembourg.

This institutional expression of the new Europe is often derided as the bureaucratic invention of an underemployed technocratic class, an invention that will, moreover, create yet another layer of European government and saddle brave new privatizing Europeans (e.g., Thatcher) with bad old social-democratic statism.

Hamilton would have had little difficulty with this familiar anti-federalist refrain. In purely economic terms, the economies of scale gained by confederation far outweigh the costs. Replacing a patchwork of contradictory national regulation with uniform Euro-regulation will so significantly reduce costs and encourage economic rationalization that European GNP will enjoy a windfall growth estimated between 4.5 percent and seven percent over the next six years.

But as Jean Monnet would have told the anti-federalists, the benefits are not just economic. Even if Brussels did cost European consumers a centime or two to cover new welfare-state, labor-driven Euro-regulations, that would be a small price to pay for a Europe integrated beyond the possibility of ruinous

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civil war. When Tory MP Ian Gow moved last year's speech from the throne, he spoke ominously of "the vaulting ambitions of the supernationalists" in Brussels. If little England does so fear vaulting ambition, is it not better that such ambition emanate from Brussels rather than Berlin?

Last October, when writing about a post-cold war world, I ventured that among the great powers of the new multipolar order would be "Europe." It was possible then to imagine a confederated Europe emerging from the structure of the EC. It is harder to imagine that now. Not because Germany is by policy its enemy, but because the rebirth of a great German nation within Europe is provoking a rebirth of national self-assertion throughout Europe. In this climate, it is impossible to think of a "Europe" emerging. As we head toward multipolarity, the pole that was to be "Europe" will instead be greater Germany. It is possible that Germany might still choose to subsume itself in Europe, but in the first flush of post-(cold)-war independence, that is hardly likely.

The Berlin Wall came down too soon. Had East Germany been the last Soviet province to fall, as we thought the Kremlin would insist, it might have been but a small piece digestible by a new and stable Europe. Having come so quickly, German unification threatens to disrupt the whole by creating in the heart of Europe a greater Germany that Europe cannot contain.

The danger is not that greater Germany will march across Europe but that its birth turns the twilight of sovereignty into a new dawn. It derails a process by which Europe was hoping to make itself safe from itself. We return instead to the old Europe, balance of power Europe, the Europe that produces more history than it can consume. •

West German politics go east.

CAMPAIGN TRAILS

By Robert Darnton

BERLIN

As the election campaign in East Germany reaches its final round, a puzzling question keeps coming up: Whatever happened to New Forum? The citizens' movement that precipitated the revolution in October and that looked almost like an East German version of Solidarity in November was nowhere to be seen by the end of February. The latest polls give it three percent of the vote as against fifty-three percent for the Social Democratic Party (SPD), thirteen percent for the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), and twelve percent for the former Communist Party (PDS). What went wrong?

The answer is the story of the East German revolution itself, which began as an uprising against a Stalinistic regime and is now settling down to party politics, Western-style. Although New Forum is running a slate of candidates on March 18, it insists it is a "movement" and not a party. Either way, it has been squeezed out by the course of events. Its difficulties could be read in the faces of the delegates to its campaign convention in Schwerin on February 23. They looked like a group of college professors attending a convention of the Modern Language Association—except that there were so few of them: barely a thousand bunched into one end of a hall that held 8,000. They did not raise hell. They did not even raise their voices. They addressed their head candidate, Jens Reich, a very nice molecular biologist from East Berlin, as "Herr Professor."

The convention consisted of nothing but speeches and a modest supply of campaign literature—poorly mimeographed handouts distributed from three card tables. There were no other props—no videos, no glamorous public figures, no posters, no campaign buttons, no slogans, no funny hats. New Forum has trimmed off its radical fringe. Its most colorful characters have drifted into left-wing splinter groups such as the Independent Women's Association, the Green Party, the United Left, the Humanistic Party of Germany, and the Free German Youth.

A few thousand members of those groups paraded through East Berlin on February 22 chanting, "GDR, our motherland," a feminist-leftist-anti-unification reply to the refrain of the center-right, "Germany, a united fatherland." But no one seemed to listen. Virtually everyone following politics in the GDR was concentrating on the conventions of the major parties, and all those favor unification with West Germany.

Hence the problem faced by New Forum. It began last October in East Berlin as a protest movement directed against the worst abuses of the old regime. By December it had established branches throughout the provinces

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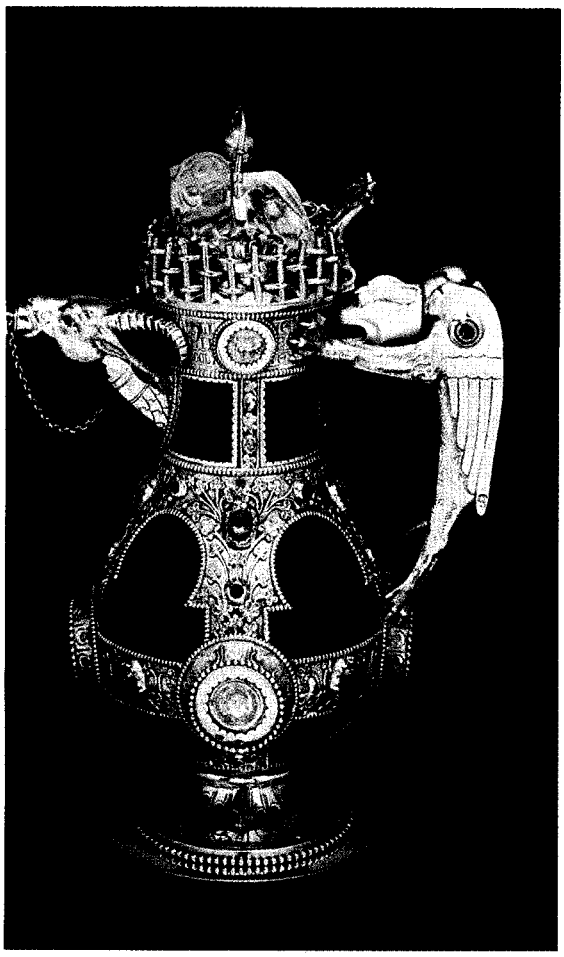
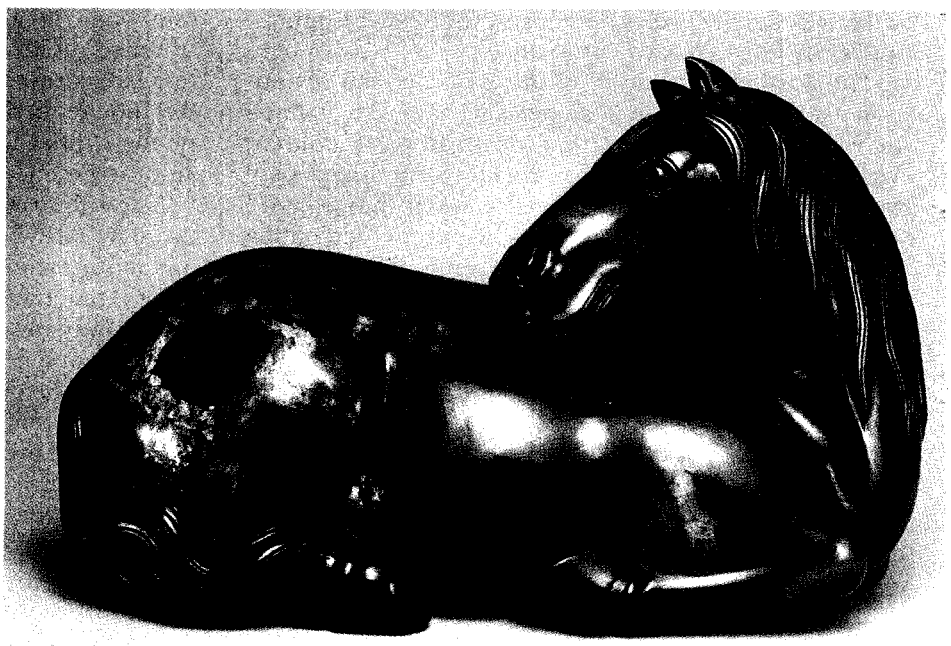
The Brilliar





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t Bequests.

It was an unprecedented idea. The year was 1816, and Richard, seventh Viscount Fitzwilliam of Merrion, wanted the University of Cambridge to have its own art museum. His bequest began the Fitzwilliam Museum, considered by many to be the finest small museum in Europe.

Now we can see why in a remarkable exhibition entitled "Treasures from the Fitzwilliam Museum: The Increase of Learning and Other Great Objects." The exhibition is as exceptional for its diversity as for its quality. It is virtually a guided tour through the history of art, with highly selective stops along the way. Pause to see a lion's ferocity on an ancient Persian coin. Leap forward a few centuries and see the power of paintings by Titian and Rubens. Stop by a drawing by Rembrandt or a print by Degas. Spend some time with sculpture from ancient Greece, or furniture from 19th-century England. In every case, what we see is what caught the discerning eye and passionate interests of generations of Cambridge-educated scholars and collectors.

We wanted to give this exhibition our support. It is rare that such collections travel, and to see this one is immensely enriching. There's the immediate benefit in seeing the finest art from other civilizations, but there is also the more lasting benefit — inevitably, we want to learn more.

National Tour: National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, March 19 - June 18, 1989
Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, TX, July 15 - October 8, 1989
National Academy of Design, New York, NY, November 5 - January 28, 1990
High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA, February 20 - May 6, 1990
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA, June 21 - September 9, 1990
The exhibition is organized by the Fitzwilliam Museum and the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC.

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(Clockwise Top Left) DECANTER, 1865, William Burges. THE LAST OF ENGLAND, 1860, Ford Madox Brown. TWO MEN'S HEADS, circa 1600, Camillo Procaccini. (Bottom Right) CHARLES, 7TH EARL OF NORTHAMPTON, 1758, Pompeo Batoni. RECUMBENT HORSE, 17th-century Chinese, black and grey jade. VASE OF FLOWERS WITH A MONKEY, circa 1635, Ambrosius Il Brosschaert.

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and seemed ready to take over the country. And by mid-January the government had conceded everything it demanded: the right to travel freely, the end of the Communist Party dictatorship, and the calling of free elections. So in February it found itself campaigning for what it had already accomplished, while the other parties had already taken up the issue of reunification.

At New Forum's convention, the talk was more of protecting human rights than winning votes. And although New Forum is part of a coalition called Alliance '90, delegates were determined to avoid politics derived from West Germany. Above all, they wanted to preserve a peculiar East German "identity," which they cannot define but see as a contrast to both the authoritarianism of the East and the consumerism of the West.

Reich tried to sound upbeat. "We achieved our goals in November," he explained in an interview. "We defeated Stalinism and forced the government to call free elections. But we have no illusions about winning them. We do not seek power; we do not want to take over ministries; we will operate from the outside and keep the politicians honest. I am not a politician myself." He certainly did not act like one. In his acceptance speech he derided the political professionals, who fed promises to the little red eye of the television camera. But he couldn't avoid the cameras himself. They pursued him mercilessly, and as he repeated the same answers to the same questions in broadcast after broadcast, he looked as though he would rather be anywhere but there, wilting under the arc lights in a tweed coat and a knit tie.

Unsatisfied with all this high-mindedness, some of the delegates staged a small, well-mannered revolt at the end of the evening. "There were thousands of people with us in the streets in October and November," one protested, "but they have left us now." "We have lost touch with the people," said another. And so it went, until the chairman called a halt, and the last speaker tried to arouse some enthusiasm with a keynote address on the victories won during the heroic days of the "October Revolution." A cluster of red and blue balloons was supposed to be released from the ceiling at the climax of his speech. But someone missed the cue. When the balloons floated down, most of the delegates had disappeared into their Trabis and were driving off through the smog toward a very uncertain future.

Three days earlier, on February 20, Helmut Kohl had come from Bonn to open the campaign of another coalition, Alliance for Germany, from the cathedral square in Erfurt. An East German CDU politician introduced him as "the chancellor of our German fatherland," and the crowd of 130,000 East Germans roared back, "Helmut! Helmut!" When at last the waves of sound receded, the chancellor's basso profundo boomed out over a magnificent amplifying system brought with him from the West: "We will shape the future as one people in one Germany." The crowd shouted back, "Germany, a united fatherland!" waving hundreds of West German flags.

Kohl was making the first of six campaign speeches that he was to deliver in the next four weeks. By mid-February his backers from the Federal Republic had already spent a million marks in the East German campaign. They had set up offices in all fifteen electoral regions and had distributed twenty-five tons of posters and pamphlets. Since Kohl himself will be standing for re-election in West Germany in December, he is really campaigning on two fronts. For him reunification is already taking place: it is a marathon of photo opportunities and TV spots for the same party on both sides of the nation.

At this stop, Kohl made three points: unification, prosperity, and the danger represented by the SPD. Above all, he paid tribute to "the splendid social order of the market economy," which had brought West Germany to the top rank of the European powers. If only such conditions could be created in East Germany, "We will build a flourishing land together." Provided, of course, that the voters keep the SPD out of office. Not only did the Social Democrats understand nothing about economics, they had a long history of collaboration with Communists, Kohl insisted, as if he himself were the coalition's candidate. While he worked the crowd, the three leaders of the parties that make up the Alliance—the East CDU, Democratic Outbreak, and the German Social Union—remained discreetly in the background. When the candidate of the East CDU, Lothar de Maiziére, at last got a turn at the microphone, he kept his message simple: "Progress and prosperity for all." He explained that he had only three wishes: that his children would no longer have to tell lies in school, that his wife would be the only one to listen when he telephoned her, and that the only persons to enter his apartment would be invited guests. The road to prosperity led toward immediate unification, without any of the dallying favored by the SPD.

The right, in short, is trying to outflank the left by sounding more eager for unification, more committed to a free market economy, and more militant against everything smacking of Stalinism. It is staging a Western-style media campaign, heavily televised and heavily financed, and is making the most of its not-so-secret weapon, Kohl himself. Thanks to his rhetoric, the weight of his office, and his sheer personal bulk, he embodies everything he proclaims: prosperity in a united Grossdeutschland.

But if it comes to a contest of personality cults, the SPD seems sure to win. It can import from the West the man who first championed "East Politics" twenty years ago and who has remained enormously popular in the GDR ever since. On February 24 former Chancellor Willy Brandt raised at least as much enthusiasm in Leipzig as Kohl had in Erfurt. At the East SPD's campaign convention, he received a standing ovation after defining his formula for unification: "What belongs together will grow together." Then, before 100,000 cheering spectators in the Karl Marx Platz (as it is still called), he mixed another metaphor into his speech: "The train of unification is gather-

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ing steam. Now we must make sure that no one falls under the wheels. It is more important to prevent that than to assure the comfort of those who are traveling first class." "Willy! Willy!" roared the crowd.

The alliance of the East and West SPD parties did not always seem so assured. So strong is the *Drang nach Westen* (drive toward the West) in the East that the politicians of the GDR are outdoing one another in advocating a quick fix with the Federal Republic. But the West Germans are now beginning to resent the pressure of emigration—100,000 settlers from the GDR have arrived since January—and to worry about the cost of unification.

In contrast to many of his East SPD cohorts (and in contrast to Kohl), Oskar Lafontaine, who is certain to head the West SPD's campaign, favors unification by means of gradual and carefully negotiated stages. Brandt has taken Lafontaine's side of the argument, and made it look like a defense of social democratic principles: by unifying Germany slowly, an SPD government would defend the subsidies and social welfare legislation that protect East Germans from the worst abuses of a market economy.

In the end, the East SPD adopted a platform favored by the leaders of the big-brother party in the West. It promised, if it formed a government, to negotiate with Bonn for the creation of a Council for German Unity, to be composed of representatives from both countries under the chairmanship of Brandt. The Council would propose a constitution for a united Germany, which—if approved by plebiscites in the East and the West—would go into effect after the election of a common parliament. Meanwhile, steps would be taken to adjust the two economies, and parallel negotiations with the four victorious powers from World War II would integrate the united Germany in the European order, while guaranteeing its present boundaries, notably the Oder-Neisse line.

It seemed like a bold formula for change, but would it be enough to win the election? Most speakers at the convention decided to play it safe by ignoring their differences on unification and attacking their most important common enemy, the CDU. The East German CDU had cooperated with the Communists for years as one of the "bloc parties" in the parliament. So it was vulnerable to the same charge that it had leveled against the Social Democrats—of being soft on communism. Stephan Hilsber, the spokesman for the SPD executive committee, drew the loudest round of applause when he observed that the CDU "used to follow Honecker [the former leader of the Communist Party], now it is following Kohl."

Where does this sort of electioneering leave the PDS—that is, the party left over from the old Communist SED? It launched its campaign at the same time as the others, in a convention that met in East Berlin on February 24 and 25. Although it could not display any prominent personalities from the West, it made the most of its own leader, Hans Modrow, who as prime minister of the transitional government has established himself as the most popular politician in the GDR.

In fact, the convention turned into a personal drama focused on Modrow. Some newspapers had reported that he would not accept the nomination as the PDS's leading candidate and might even leave the party. Were Modrow to resign, or even to refuse the nomination, the PDS would lose so badly on March 18 that it might never recover. He has established a reputation for integrity in contrast to the old apparatchiks, who are now awaiting trial on charges ranging from corruption to treason.

The leaders of the PDS made it clear to Modrow that they did not expect him to campaign at all. He could concentrate on keeping the country together and directing the government—a role that also helps to win votes. All he need do is say yes to the nomination. "Hans, you can feel how every member of this party depends on you," said Gregor Gysi, the Party secretary, to Modrow before wild applause at the opening session of the convention.

When at last Modrow rose to give his answer on the next evening, the delegates hung on his every word. He bent over his text, reading quietly and deliberately without a glance at the television cameras. The tension grew as he listed all the reasons not to run: the party needed to make a new beginning with new leaders; his first responsibility was to the people, not the party; he was exhausted; and he needed to devote all his remaining energy to running the government during the critical weeks before the election. Then, in a spectacular non sequitur, he announced that he could not disappoint hundreds of thousands of people: he would accept the nomination. The delegates whooped and cheered.

Modrow seemed to be the only thing worth cheering for. Gysi announced that the membership, which had stood at 2.3 million a year ago, had dropped to 700,000. That might be enough to bring in twelve percent of the vote, as the polls had predicted, but it seems likely that many members will continue to drift into left-wing splinter groups or the SPD. The party that once held a monopoly on power will almost certainly be reduced to a marginal role in the opposition. But will it be able to play any role at all? Gysi announced that the PDS was ready to enter into a coalition, even as a member of the opposition, but all the other parties say they will have nothing to do with it. The PDS has turned into a political pariah.

If the campaign has demonstrated anything, it is the isolation of both the PDS and New Forum. The two political forces that had confronted one another at the beginning of the revolution have been relegated to the sidelines, and East German politics has taken on a West German look. The peculiar political identity of East Germany, as the leaders of New Forum understand it, seems likely to disappear in the common pattern of politics-as-usual. Or was that identity an illusion, generated in the heat of the events last autumn? Revolutions never remain fixed in their heroic phase. The October revolution has disappeared from East Germany, and March may be the beginning of a Thermidorian reaction. •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Adventurers

I hope, very hard, that Sean Connery isn't going to become a bore. He's been a sort of audience's friend ever since he outgrew James Bond—staunch and companionable. He never seemed right for Bond, worldwide success notwithstanding; he lacked the suavity that was in the best of the Bonds, Roger Moore. But in so many films Connery has been good company—among them *Murder on the Orient Express*, *The Molly Maguires*, *The Man Who Would Be King*, and, as he aged, *The Untouchables*.

Lately, however, he has begun to trade on our affection for him, not earning it each time out. In *The Presidio* and *Family Business*, he has been loafing or laying it on. It's hard to say whether his doing too little or too much is more troubling. In **The Hunt for Red October** (Paramount), as a Soviet submarine commander, he loafs again. Little in the character is explored or colored. It's not a highly complex role, but the man has qualities that could make him interesting; after all, it's his aberrant action that initiates the whole naval plot. Connery merely fulfills his contractual obligations to the producer—no depth in him at all. I hope he'll do fewer films and do them better. I'd hate to lose him as a friend-on-screen.

James Earl Jones, playing an American admiral, confirms that he is half a fine actor. He badly needs guidance from a director, otherwise the result is bulk and boom. Which is what we get in *Red October* because this director, John McTiernan, though pretty good at marshaling special effects, is of little use to actors.

McTiernan proves the point further with the wobbling he permits in Alec Baldwin, the leading man, who manages to be pallid and to mug at the same time. Of all the other men in the cast—women are almost completely absent—only Richard Jordan as a national security adviser and Scott Glenn as a U. S. submarine commander register.

The screenplay by Larry Ferguson and Donald Stewart, adapted from Tom Clancy's big best seller, may be faithful to the novel (I'll never know), but in itself it's a wild melodrama pretending to be portentous.

The naval intrigues are sometimes effective; McTiernan handles them as well as the next—or last—movie manufacturer. But this cold war story, set in 1984, suffers, even as entertainment, from the events of the last four months, in which political pipe dreams have become reality. *Red October* has a few lines that can be read as tiny prophecies, but they could have been read as tiny pieties if the last four months had been different. One further blessing in those Eastern European changes is that thriller writers will have to paw elsewhere for a while.

Richard Francis Burton (1821-90) said: "In our day . . . we live under a despotism of the lower 'middle-class' Philister," but today when that despotism is much more truly in place, the Victorian age seems the residence of giants, with Burton eminent among them.

An Anglo-Irishman, he left Oxford after only two years but not before mastering Latin, Greek, and Arabic, the first of the thirty languages he was to learn. He was commissioned an officer in the army in India, where he spent six years and of course learned more languages. He was a boxer and a swordsman. He was one of the first Englishmen to make a pilgrimage to Mecca (disguised as a Pathan). In the mid-1850s, together with John Hanning Speke, an ex-officer who was interested in adventure and hunting, Burton set out from the east coast of Africa to find the source of the Nile, an expedition that ended in quarrels, claims, and counterclaims between him and Speke. Burton traveled extensively in North America, then became British consul in São Paulo, Damascus, and in Trieste, where he spent his last twenty-four years.

Throughout his life he wrote numerous books about his travels. He made substantial contributions to the fields of archaeology, mining, and zoology. He published a translation of the great national poem of Portugal, Camoens's *The Lusiads*. And he made a gorgeous translation of *The Arabian Nights*, with extensive commentaries, which, in the Heritage Press edition, runs to 3,975 pages. It appeared in 1885, and a year later he was knighted.

If we add that he was an enthusiast of amour; that he translated the *Kama Sutra* and *The Perfumed Garden*; that in 1861 he married a woman who was madly devoted to him; and that his widow buried

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Cinema Paradiso. *A screen-struck Sicilian boy becomes a screen-struck man in a small town whose warm life centers on the local film theater. Pleasantly sentimental. (Reviewed 2/19/90)* **Glory.** *Powerful. A chronicle of a black Union regiment in the Civil War, done—except for the anachronistic performance of the young colonel by Matthew Broderick—very movingly. (1/8&15/90)* **Lonely Woman Seeks Life Companion.** *The Soviet Union sends a small-scale, acutely detailed comedy-drama about a lonely woman in her forties and an intelligent drifter. Delicate directing and acting. (3/19/90)* **Mama, There's a Man in Your Bed.** *From France, of course. Bright and winning confection about a Parisian CEO and the black woman who cleans his office. Made to please, it succeeds. (3/5/90)* **—SK**

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him in a marble mausoleum—in Surrey—shaped like a Bedouin tent hung with camel bells and bleeding hearts, we may believe that, taken all in all, there just might be a film in this man's life.

Mountains of the Moon (Tri-Star) is not that film, and not because it deals with only one portion of Burton's life, the African adventures with Speke. It deals with them clumsily. The screenplay was adapted by Bob Rafelson, who directed, and by William Harrison from the latter's novel, and its first, irredeemable failure is that it doesn't infuse us with excitement about the goal of the expedition. The film conveys little sense of what exploration meant in centuries gone by, especially the last one—the almost priestly sense of vocation, of bringing mankind closer to complete knowledge and governance. Without that conviction, the expedition is just another safari, and the resulting troubles between Burton and Speke seem only bickerings.

More, the screenplay never mediates successfully between data and drama. Much of the material is factual, I take it, but on screen, it is trite: the desertion of the bearers when the going gets rough, the scene in which the laggard watch of the camp predicts attack by hostile natives, the scene in which Burton and Speke are captured and impress the king of the region with a pistol. These sequences, even if factual, are like reruns. And the story seems to end several times before it finishes—after two hours and fifteen minutes.

At one point Speke covers the face of the wounded and unconscious Burton with kisses. Possibly this is to suggest unrequited love as the basis of the later quarrels; but the hint hangs in midair.

Rafelson's previous films (*Five Easy Pieces*, *Black Widow*) suggest no affinity for action epic, and none is shown here. He seems often to be remembering *Lawrence of Arabia*, though David Lean would not have used shots of files of men moving across the top of a ridge against the sky.

Patrick Bergin is Burton and may have been chosen because he somewhat resembles the more recent Richard Burton (who, in his prime, would have been perfect for the part). Bergin does his best to be sexy and dynamic. Iain Glen plays Speke, who is flavorless here, all too fittingly.

Fiona Shaw, who was the Dublin doctor in *My Left Foot* and is currently setting the London theater ablaze, plays Isabel, Burton's beloved. She refuses to use acting clichés for a cliché role, but instead of tricking it up, she digs as deep as the writing permits. Still, the woman is only one more action-film Penelope waiting for Her Man's return. To use Shaw in the role is like using a Ferrari for household errands. •

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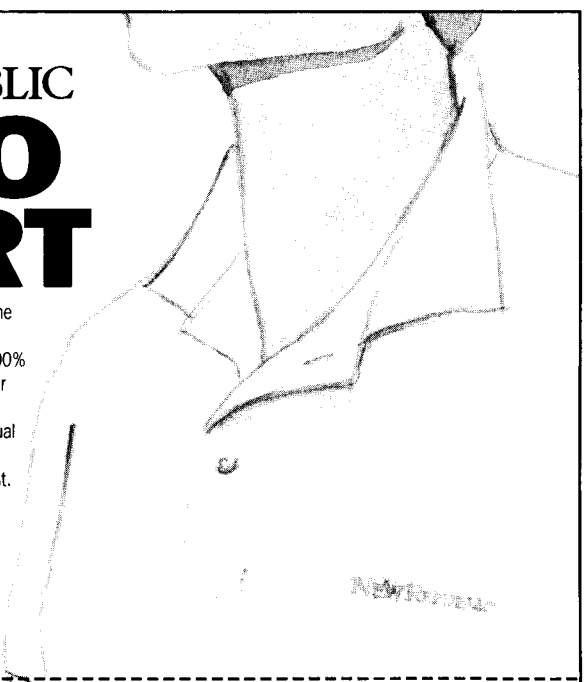

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Robert Brustein on Theater

The Havels and the Have-Nots

The accession of the playwright Vaclav Havel to the presidency of Czechoslovakia may not portend a new era of philosopher-kings, but it certainly reflects the links that have historically existed in Europe between politics and art. Elizabeth I of England wrote verses; so did Frederick the Great of Prussia; even the current pope squeezed out a few youthful plays. Richard Brinsley Sheridan served in Parliament, W. B. Yeats was a "smiling public man" in the Irish Senate, and Bernard Shaw stood for election as a Fabian candidate.

It is true that American writers occasionally run for office, but only our movie stars manage to get elected. If Ronald Reagan or Clint Eastwood were ever libeled with the name of artist, they'd probably reach for a Colt or Magnum. We value performance, not intellect or imagination; that's the reason our writers turn into performers, too. In Europe, however, the creative artist remains a hugely influential figure, which is why so many of them, including Havel, have spent so much time in jail or exile. It is a truism that the European writer matters in a way that the American writer does not, though working in an atmosphere of considerably more freedom.

Despite his delicacy of temperament and powerful ironic intellect, Havel is not, in my opinion, a dramatist of the first rank. He has expended his engines less in refining his art than in bearing witness to the oppressive conditions of his own country. Consequently, like Athol Fugard (who would be a valuable addition to any new South African government), he is notable more as the embodiment of stirring humanistic convictions than of inspired revelations. Havel's incredible media exposure will no doubt result in numerous productions of his plays, about which little truth will be spoken. But I believe that in becoming Czechoslovakia's president he has finally found his true calling—to help in the task of reshaping his disfigured nation into a work of democratic art.

Havel's plays suffer the fate of all engaged dramaturgy—untidy reality is sometimes shunted aside by the force of strong political convictions. American plays usually suffer from the opposite condition, lacking any political content at all. Our playwrights are often criticized for lacking a public dimension, for choosing to write what the English critic Benedict Nightingale calls "diaper plays" about personal family relationships. For that reason, the two works under review are unusual: each tries, with varying degrees of success, to generalize its plot into studies of the American character.

Richard Nelson's **Some Americans Abroad** at Lincoln Center's Mitzi E. Newhouse Theater was first commissioned by the Royal Shakespeare Company. Like a few of our dramatists (David Mamet included), Nelson seems to be finding a more congenial home in England for his work. An impressionist study in the Russian manner about a group of American academics on a British theater tour, *Some Americans Abroad* may very well be Nelson's most focused play yet, and it is currently receiving a subtle, well-acted production in the hands of Roger Michell. There are few direct confrontations in this work. It is Nelson's transparent assumption that the American professoriat is either too timid or too cowardly to engage each other honestly. But, as in Chekhov, careers are being ruined and lives are being broken as people engage in the customary rites of everyday life.

Chief among these are eating and theatergoing, both symbolized in the setting—a group of suspended dining tables and lawn furniture, backed by a large blowup of memorial verses to Shakespeare. Collected around lunch at Luigi's in Covent Garden are a sextet of students and teachers, discussing disarmament, the death penalty, and *Major Barbara*; their section leader is the department chairman, Joe Taylor. A bearded former radical and chief defender of Shaw's "intellectual honesty," Taylor is entrusted with the task of telling Henry McNeil, a dowdy non-tenured Milton scholar, that he has no future at the college. But he lacks the "intellectual honesty" to admit that he's offered McNeil's job to another.

Many lunches and play visits later, after two of the teachers (one of them married) have started an affair, Taylor is confronted with another academic crisis: a female student has dropped out of the tour to sleep with an Amherst boy. Taylor's handling of this apparently momentous dereliction is as bungled as his treatment of McNeil. And when the girl, "to save her butt," accuses another teacher of touching her breasts, Taylor accepts the charge without sufficient investigation. At the last dinner of the tour, after everyone has thoroughly tired of three-and-a-half-hour British productions, the retired chairman of the department—a forthright outspoken conservative—tells McNeil he hears he has to "move on," while the embarrassed Taylor, fumbling with the bill, tries to find some tactful way of saving the department the expense of an invited guest's meal.

Filling out this undersketched plot are group recitations of Wordsworth's *Westminster Bridge* under umbrellas (followed by off-key renderings of *God Save the Queen*), and considerable postprandial chat—as the academics scrape their spumoni cups and wave their breadsticks—about the splendors of the British stage and the vulgarity of (other) American tourists. The satire on the typical Anglophilia of our cultivated elite is priceless, and it is deliciously fashioned in the Horatian manner, through indirection and representation. Nelson may have overestimated the current importance of the *loco parentis* function, not to mention the scandal power of college amours (sexual harassment excluded) in an age of comparative erotic freedom. But he has certainly nailed the hypocrisy, timidity, and expediency of certain university administrators, not to mention the pretentiousness and snobbery of educated middle-class Americans abroad.

As director, Michell begins each scene by lowering another prop from the ceiling to set the stage, and flashing the lights briefly as if each episode were a photo opportunity. He also handles the cast with discretion and authority. Colin Stinton as Taylor captures the weak, flabby nature of a weasel who uses his intelligence to escape reality rather than confront it (in one scene, he tells an obnoxious American tourist: "I'm British, I'm a naturalized British citizen; I tutor at Oxford"), and Bob Balaban's McNeil is appropriately reticent, panicked, and armored against reality. Kate Burton, as McNeil's embittered wife, fixes Taylor with eyes that are lasered with hate, and Henderson Forsythe, playing the conservative chairman, comes on looking and opinionating like a latter-day Ezra Pound. John Bedford Lloyd and the always dependable Frances Conroy are the clandestine lovers. And Richard Nelson, who virtually never repeats himself from play to play, may very well have found his theatrical identity as the American David Lodge.

Mac Wellman's **Crowbar** is a blunter work than *Some Americans Abroad* and its social ideas are cruder, but it deserves

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some marks for ambition, if not for originality. *Crowbar* is not only being performed at the Victory Theatre—a newly renovated house on 42nd Street. It is, in effect, a history of that theater, first called the Republic when owned by Oscar Hammerstein, then named for David Belasco after he refurbished it for his spectacular productions (starting with *Sag Harbor* in 1900), then renamed the Republic when it featured movies, burlesque, and porno films, and finally called the Victory, having reverted to its former legitimate glory. Besides being a history of the theater, *Crowbar* serves as something of a theater tour, minutely examining, with floodlights and flashlights, every corner of the ancient stage and auditorium, and especially the gorgeous, cupid-decorated overhead dome. The audience is seated both on stage and to the side, with most of the action in the orchestra and balconies, affording a clear view of the actors—and of a critic for the dailies snoozing in his chair.

Billed as a "pataphysical compilation"—a reference to Alfred Jarry's School of Pataphysics—culled from newspaper stories around the turn of the century (the date of *Sag Harbor*'s opening), *Crowbar* is intended as a ghost story, its dust-covered spirits being the various suicides, homicides, infanticides, and lunatics of the time. A mostly female chorus stomps through the house like a spectral chain gang, a limber figure with saxophone (Reg E. Cathey) provides the exposition, a Polish woman (Elzbieta Czyzewska) wails about the changes in management over the past ninety years and the plight of her poor benighted country (which "doesn't exist most of the time"). Her bewildered husband (Omar Shapli) tells us that "America is an empty theater and all the theaters are haunted," and finally David Belasco (Yusef Bulos) materializes to extol his ingenious technical improvements and to regret "the infamy of consuming time."

Although well executed, the production spinoffs of *Marat/Sade* and *Phantom of the Opera* tire one rather quickly, and so does the inflated style of the playwright's dialogue. (One is tempted to ask, along with one of his characters, for "a little reduction of the garrulity.") Because they are content to substitute rhetorical tirades for dramatic speech, Wellman's historical ghosts never manage to escape their tabloid origins. And the wider theme seems to have a tabloid imprint, too. I'm not certain how much more I know about my country after being told it's an empty, haunted theater. I'm not even sure how much more I know about the theater after hearing it described as "a kind of big place—with red walls—like the inside of a human heart—but not as empty." But then I have never been numbered among those who grow weak-kneed and wet-eyed about endangered Broadway houses. I did not join the chorus of outrage when the Morosco and the Belasco were being threatened. And while I am delighted whenever such legitimate theaters as the Victory in Times Square and the Majestic in Brooklyn are rescued from urban decay and porno nude shows, I confess to being much more interested in what goes on inside these buildings than in the ghosts and ornaments of their past.

What's going on inside the Victory at the moment is a riot of environmental techniques, performed with all the enthusiasm, and some of the limitations, of an advanced drama-school exercise. This En Garde Arts production seems imitatively avant-garde. Wellman possesses, at times, a certain daffy Joycean eloquence that augurs well for future better-formed plays, and Richard Caliban's direction shows control of mood, effects, and movement. But in view of all that's happening in the world these days—during a time when at least one playwright has things on his mind urgent enough to dominate the affairs of an entire country—*Crowbar* seems peculiarly theater-enclosed. For all its technical ambitiousness, it's another melancholy sign of how little American art seems to matter in the universe at large. •

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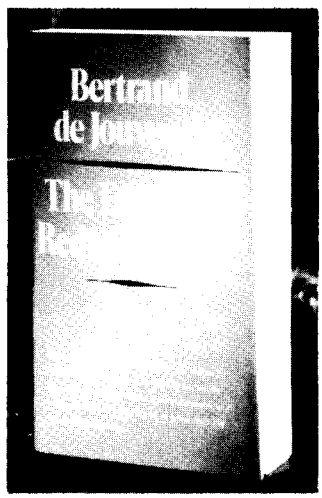

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Mark Stevens on Art

Jenny Take a Ride

So much contemporary art—especially the work that draws upon mass culture—depends on a particularly enervating strain of irony. Less nourishing and less serious than the vital apprehensions of great art, this irony has an elusive character, yet one recognizes it immediately. It is a central attribute of our time. It attracts patrons, intellectuals, crowds. Many artists would feel naked without it. Jenny Holzer's art has this irony. The most celebrated of the many artists now working with media-inspired means—she is famous for her electronic signs—Holzer has been selected to represent the United States at the next Venice Biennale; this winter her work has been the subject of important exhibits at the Guggenheim Museum and the DIA Art Foundation in New York. She is the right artist to discuss, not least if one wants to understand this kind of irony.

Holzer went to the Rhode Island School of Design in the 1970s, and like many artists in those days she became interested in a more public-spirited, even political art. She began by putting words into her paintings. Eventually she dropped the painting altogether, and started mounting messages in many public places, including billboards, the sides of subway cars, park benches, and baseball parks. Such pieces obviously shared much with the Dada and pop strains in modern American art, but more importantly they also tied into an increasingly popular view of the power of the media. In a nutshell, the view goes like this: we are surrounded by a blizzard of messages, icons, slogans; this has profoundly shaped our minds, affecting the way we think, feel, see, and behave; the media are the main message; and that probably means big trouble.

Already influential in the 1960s, this view has been expressed several million times in lectures, seminars, books, and articles. As image-makers, artists are natural connoisseurs and critics of the media, and thus an ideal constituency for these notions. Besides, the mainstream art world, which is nothing if not academic, is devoted to semiotics, to deconstruction, to the "politics of representation," and to analyses of how art "reflects society," all of which suit the conventional paranoia about the media. Many contemporary artists now play with signs and signifiers, doctor photographs, work with neon and television. They are frequently likened to landscape painters, the idea being that nature and paint have given way to a new environment created by the media and their means.

Artists of this kind often make a quasi-political point, hoping to "liberate" the mind into a moment's freedom from the numbing power of mass images. That is the aspect of Holzer's art that I like best. She is an artist whose subject is the way we think, and she is at her best when invading territory not accustomed to serious thought. My favorite example of her work is reproduced on the cover of the Guggenheim catalog of her exhibit. On a huge electronic billboard in Las Vegas, beneath the logo "Caesar's Palace" and above an arrow pointing toward "Parking," she presented the line "MONEY CREATES TASTE." Another of the Vegas signs said, "PROTECT ME FROM WHAT I WANT." A billboard in Cambridge said (in lower case): "It is man's fate to outsmart himself."

These signs are funny, and telling, in their context. The same is true of the Holzer messages that seem utterly foreign to their place—as if they were smuggled in, messages in a bottle—particularly those that speak in a private whisper in loud public places. An electronic sign seen from Highway 101 in San Francisco said: "TURN SOFT & LOVELY ANYTIME YOU HAVE A CHANCE." Both kinds of sign interrupt—with an unexpected thought or statement of feeling—the flow of pop patter. If consumer culture is turning us into sleepwalkers, stealing into our collective unconscious, making us do its bidding, then these billboards may momentarily snap us awake.

Even if the threat is overstated, it is not a bad idea to turn soft and lovely instead of buying some more Bud. Such signs may not amount to much—the ideas are hardly fresh, and the "appropriation" of the public space is an old Dada and modernist device—but they are good-humored and unpretentious. They are guerrilla raids in a worthwhile cause. The import of Holzer's two recent installations in New York, however, is different. Instead of challenging mass culture on its own ground—instead of infiltrating its means with unexpected meanings—she has used the manner of mass culture to subvert the foundations of serious thought in the name of a fashionable despair and its attendant ironies.

At the Guggenheim, one enters a darkened museum where a narrow electronic strip, like a Wall Street ticker or the electric billboard in Times Square that relays news bulletins, follows the spirals of the museum up and up and around. Along this strip a succession of messages proceeds, generally counterclockwise. They come in groups, each of which has a certain tone. (Many have been used in her previous work.) One group might be manifesto-style statements about revolutionary politics, such as "REJOICE OUR TIMES ARE INTOLERABLE . . . TAKE COURAGE FOR THE WORST IS A HARBINGER OF THE BEST . . . ONLY DIRE CIRCUMSTANCE CAN PRECIPITATE THE OVERTHROW OF OPPRESSORS." Another might be a collection of truisms or snatches of contemporary thinking, as in this excerpt: "MORALS ARE FOR LITTLE PEOPLE . . . MOST PEOPLE ARE NOT FIT TO RULE THEMSELVES . . . MOTHERS SHOULDN'T MAKE TOO MANY SACRIFICES . . . MUCH WAS DECIDED BEFORE YOU WERE BORN . . . MURDER HAS ITS SEXUAL SIDE . . . MYTHS MAKE REALITY MORE INTELLIGIBLE . . ."

Each strip of messages finishes, running out the top of the spiral before the next series begins below. Holzer does different visual things to the messages. In one group, a few of the messages might blink. Perhaps the strip will also run backward, or it might run twice, quickly in red and slowly in yellow, the one superimposed on the other. Sometimes there seems to be a visual device linking the succeeding groups. Sometimes not.

Holzer has always liked stringing together lists of truisms, concise statements of various ideas, platitudes, opinions, and bits of philosophy that seem current. Their interest rarely resides in their wit or their brilliance; Holzer's maxims are not competing with La Rochefoucauld's or Wilde's. Instead, she is a master of the almost-epigram, a clever magpie who collects the shiny thought-scraps that you think you've read somewhere but can't place. The critic Kim Levin described Holzer's tone in this way: "The words themselves seem to have sprung fully warped from the bitter wells of the collective clichéd unconscious . . . sensible sounding and out of control."

Upon entering the museum, my initial response was one of childlike pleasure. The museum has never looked so odd. There is some malicious satisfaction to be had in the thought of Frank Lloyd Wright, who never showed much respect for any art but architecture, being matched spiral

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for spiral. But it is what comes next—or rather, what doesn't come next—that really matters. In the rotunda, the visitors to the museum begin to resemble cross-eyed owls, as they swivel their heads trying to read along. Some sit on the ancient-seeming circle of benches that also contain Holzer messages, chiseled into the granite. Others trail around the ramps. The guards have a glassy-eyed look.

Perhaps a few people seriously read each individual message, but most just browse. Critics have spent little time discussing the actual content of Holzer's aphorisms, and they are right not to, because their content is not really the point. The point is in the glimpse, in the constant spooling out, in the unending stream of middling and junky insight. No individual message is particularly interesting. Anyway there isn't any time to consider it. One message generally follows closely upon the next and circles up the Guggenheim from right to left, whereas we naturally read down and from left to right. So it's a chore to read. You do it for a while. You walk around. Soon all the messages begin to seem pretty much the same, one hardly worth differentiating from another: "DIE FAST AND QUIET WHEN THEY INTERROGATE YOU OR LIVE SO LONG THAT THEY ARE ASHAMED TO HURT YOU ANYMORE" is here and gone and then comes "IN A DREAM YOU SAW A WAY TO SURVIVE AND YOU WERE FULL OF JOY," and on and on.

In this remarkable environment, all thinking—good, bad, indifferent—slowly turns into a generalized bologna, machine-processed and ingested without much consideration. Our minds begin to fill with neon chatter. Our arguments are billboards. We become a succession of one-liners, going round and round. The practice of thought seems infiltrated, possessed, violated by something mechanical. The sense of the mind yielding to the machine is particularly vivid in the Guggenheim, since Wright's spiraling form, when left to itself, has a thrilling organic power. In Holzer's hands, the spiral of life becomes a tape loop.

The Guggenheim installation transforms several kinds of thought into junk. To begin with, it saps opinion of strength. One opinion soon appears as good as another; indeed, what is interesting about an opinion is that it is an opinion, not what it upholds. The art of thought loses its force—for thinking as an art is characterized, above all, by formal grace. A good epigram is pure delight, an art-dart whose wit and concision create the illusion that the mind has suddenly pierced the knotted difficulty of the world, and that for a moment nothing more need be said.

In the end, of course, something more must always be said. That is why the making of clever little thoughts remains a minor art. It is part of growing up to accept that no epigram can attain the brilliant finality of perfect silence. Having diminished even the art of the epigram—piling one on top of another so that the savor of the form is destroyed—Holzer then proceeds to make sustained thought itself seem equally vulgar, impossible, and ridiculous, for the Guggenheim installation is nothing if not an example of sustained thought. Sustained, that is, as a succession of trivial sound bites that just go on and on, until one feels trapped in a corner by a phrasemaker in garrulous senility.

At the Guggenheim, another kind of thought sometimes interrupts the public pronouncements—a more private, poetic form of discourse. This is one such message strip: "AN OPPOSITION MAN IS CHASED THROUGH HIS TOWN AND SHOT IN A SMELLING TRAP PEOPLE COME TO POKE LIVE FINGERS THROUGH THE HOLES IN HIM THEY LOOK AT THEIR FINGERS TO DIVINE WHETHER THEY WILL BE SHOT THEY SHRINK AND SWELL AND RUN TO HUNT THE PRESIDENT OF THE NATION WHO IS THE TRAPPER . . ."

Holzer's DIA installation, called "Laments," includes only this more poetic

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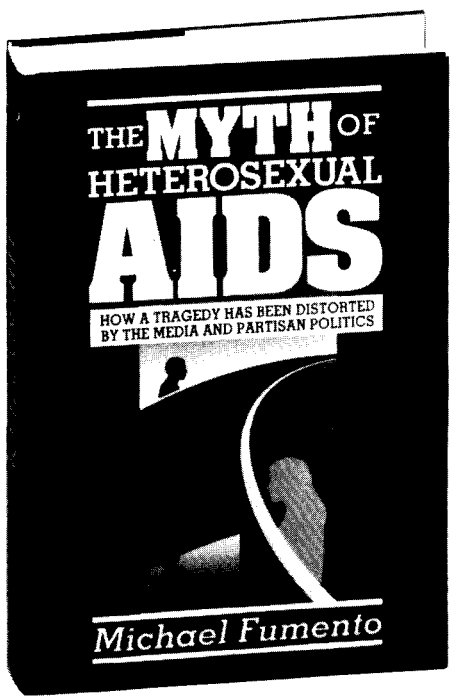

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form. She attached vertical electronic signs to a dozen columns in a cavernous warehouse space. The room is dark. A series of thirteen Laments, melancholy poemlike writings often touched with an impending feeling of death (one concerns AIDS), rises electronically up these columns. As at the Guggenheim, the words do different electronic things—they flash, they change color, and so on.

In a room that gives off the larger space are granite blocks in the shape of sarcophagi, onto which the very same Laments have also been chiseled. Here is the first Lament in a published version of the series:

WHAT I FEAR IS
IN A BOX WITH FUR
TO MUFFLE IT.
EVERY DAY I DO NOTHING
IMPORTANT BECAUSE I AM
SCARED BLANK AND LAZY,
BUT THEN THE MEN COME.
I PUT MY MOUTH ON THEM.
I SPIT AND WRITE
WITH THE WET.
THE WET SAYS WHAT MUST STOP
AND
WHAT SHALL BEGIN.
I SPIT BECAUSE THE DEATH
SMELL IS TOO CLOSE TO ME.
THE STINK MAKES WORDS
TELL THE TRUTH ABOUT
WHO KILLS AND
WHO IS THE VICTIM.
DEATH IS THE
MODERN ISSUE.
I THINK BECAUSE
MY BRAIN DOES IT.
I WANT BAD IDEAS TO STAY
IN THE MIND TO MAKE
PLEASURE WITHOUT HARM.
A CLEAR THOUGHT MUST
COME TO STOP THE MEN
AND MAKE THE AUDIENCE
LAUGH UNTIL THEIR
INSIDES BUBBLE.

However genuine the intention or the feeling, this is not good poetry. Consider "DEATH IS THE MODERN ISSUE." That may seem impressive as an electronic blip, disappearing up a column in a flash, but if you have a moment to think about it you will recall that death is also the ancient issue, the medieval issue, the Jewish issue, the Christian issue, the Hindu issue, the Aztec issue—the human issue. The line is hollow, all show. Those who find the DIA installation "haunting" are easily haunted.

Of course, a close look at the Laments is unfair, because they do not set out to be poetry read on the page. They are not designed for reflection; Holzer here does to poetic thought what she has done to opinions and manifestos. As with that line about death, the impact depends upon the momentary grab for attention and, like the messages at the Guggenheim, the Laments are reminiscent of the great mass of the almost-good. They exist primarily as thoughts owned by their means of presentation. It might seem odd that Holzer, by rendering her messages on sarcophagi and on electronic signs, should choose to write in both stone and ribbons of light; one seems ancient and the other contemporary, one forever and the other for a second. In fact, they share an important attribute: neither presents the living, supple space in which real thinking can occur. If the electronic messages melt away before we can grasp them in our mind, the chiseled words are too slow and heavy, as immovable as death. One hardly lives; the other is already dead.

Why would an artist want to do this? Why turn thinking into a tape loop sarcophagus or neon flash? The answer is that Holzer is illustrating a fashionable view of contemporary life, in which we are understood as powerless. Perhaps the most telling line in the Lament is "I THINK BECAUSE MY BRAIN DOES IT." The belief that one is programmed by genes, language, the unconscious, corporations, the media is, of course, one of the main themes of contemporary thought. Holzer is not celebrating, she is exposing. She is telling us, with panache, what is happening in our period to our minds. Isn't modern culture fragmented, discontinuous, a matter of glimpses? Isn't it turning our brains into tapes? Don't we decorate our degradation with these sparkles, dots, and neon pulsations? Isn't that melancholy?

Perhaps, but I have seen and heard this so often—all my life, it seems—that I have grown more interested in efforts to examine what this outlook leaves out. In any case, Holzer herself, like many artists today, is playing a tricky game with these messages. In the Guggenheim catalog, she expresses her admiration for Beckett. This suggests that works like "Laments" may be also intended as real writing. If so, the comparison is unwittingly revealing. Beckett was a slow worker who worried every nuance out of his words, an artist of silences that were the result of a truly despairing effort to reach the truth. Holzer is quick, clever, ironic. Her silences are noisy.

She does mean some of these messages, sort of; particularly the poetic ones. But she is protected from any sustained analysis by her ironic portrayal of what mass culture is doing to various kinds of thinking. This allows her to stand somewhat apart, not quite implicated in the quickly passing words. A knowing artist can now present the presumed effects of mass culture—can engage in any trivialization at all—protected by irony from the charge of complicity. One does not blame the messenger for bringing the news.

But the irony is not strong, fresh, or piercing enough to prevent such art from becoming just another version of what it is exposing. It is too easy both to like and to dislike Holzer's visual razzle-dazzle, too easy both to criticize and to enjoy the messages. What makes contemporary irony so tricky is its mischievous attitude toward judgment, its manner of sliding

Crucifixion: Montgomery, Alabama

In the hot dark they dug a hole—
quickly, and with some panic dug
a small hole, tipped in the cross, braced it
with cinderblocks and wedges. Flames raced
through burlap soaked in kerosene:
a short, lop-sided, crude, half-burning cross.

Ah, Lord—each day, each breath, you're back
on some cross or another, nailed,
jabbed, taunted. And one eternal cross
burns through a hot night on this scorched
patch of suburban lawn. Judge Johnson's lawn.

I went to college with his son,
who, one fall day, with Easter still
six months stretched out into the future,
went in his room, shotgunned himself.

I would have said he died for us, our sins,
but I no longer know who Jesus is.
He's someone walking through his life
—or hers—till God whispers, *It's you.*
And God's denied: "You're wrong. It isn't me."
Meanwhile, on the other side of town,
two boys—one fourteen, one fifteen—
load their homemade cross on a truck.
God's voice grows louder and is still
denied. The truck turns down Christ's street.
God's shouting now. God roars. The boys
erect their cross, light it, run off,
run hide, and wait to see whom God has chosen.

Or does God simply choose us all?

ANDREW HUDGINS

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into collaboration with the meretricious. Knowingness is safety.

I wish there were some real danger in this complicity. That would be alarming and interesting. But this is academic museum art, a brilliant reportage of news that is no longer news. What impressed me the most in the Guggenheim installation was something that the artist did not intend: the vacant museum bays, where the art is usually presented. I had never seen them look like that. All the art was moved to that busy electronic strip, and the dim bays had the power of a theater on Monday, or a niche that has lost its statue, or a robbed grave. •

Mother Country

BY HERMIONE LEE

Daddy, We Hardly Knew You by Germaine Greer

(Knopf, 311 pp., $19.95)

The real problem is Mummy. "Reg Greer" is called Daddy by his middle-aged daughter, even after his death, because she would still like to love him, and would like him to have loved her. But Mummy, very much alive, is never called anything else but "Mother," a word, we are told at the outset, "admirably adapted for saying through clenched teeth." As the world's most famous feminist sets out, teeth clenched, across the world in search of her father's true life story, she is balked, mocked, and misled by her terrible mother, who sits perpetually tanning her aged body on her sunbed in a Melbourne suburb, made up to the nines and shrieking with demonic laughter.

It's an Australian version of Conrad's grimly knitting ladies, placed like Norns or "tricoteuses" at the gateway of Marlow's journey toward the fraudulent Kurtz. To account for the catastrophic ill luck and frustration that dog her quest toward her own particular heart of darkness, Greer evolves a fantasy of a primal elder's curse, like Noah's curse on his sons for uncovering his nakedness. One myth tends to leak into another with this global thinker, so the biblical curse turns into a pact with an Indian goddess and a pursuit by the Eumenides. These Furies bear a marked resemblance to one inescapable figure. Who forced the father to plead and sob, who "foamed at the mouth" like a "mad dog," who took all the old man's possessions and threw him out to die, who never cared enough to find out who he really was? Who called the daughter a foul-mouthed liar and told her that everything she ever achieved was rubbish? Why, mother, mother, mother!

It might seem surprising that Germaine Greer, whose life as a performer and writer has been dedicated to establishing a coherent system of values for women, should present us with "mother" as the embodiment of sadism and stupidity. In fact, the combination of terrible mother and fraudulent daddy is the key to her life's work. *Daddy, We Hardly Knew You* is an autobiography (and a detective novel, and a travelogue, and a history of Australia, and a collection of the usual breathtakingly opinionated Greerisms) that reveals the autobiographies inside the earlier "public" works.

Greer introduced her 1988 collection of essays, *The Madwoman's Underclothes*, with a euphoric reminiscence of her first experience, twenty years before, of peasant life in Calabria. Like *Daddy* . . ., it is a story of pride before a fall: one of Greer's most endearing characteristics is that she never minds looking a fool. Arriving with a baggage of hip Western prejudices about freedom, independence, and sexiness, she began to learn the virtue of traditional communal life from her neighbors' extended families. The son of the shepherd next door was embarrassed for her that she had no husband and no mother:

> His voice would drop to a whisper, as if he was asking something deeply shameful, "Why did your mother send you away?" I tried a hundred ways of answering that one, but to Mariuzz, not loving your mother above all earthly things was unimaginable. If I tried to explain that I left home at eighteen and neither my mother nor I ever tried to make contact, his face became haggard with trying to understand such a nightmare.

The memory culminates in an emotional celebration of "the only perfect love . . . not sexual love, which is riddled with hostility and insecurity, but the wordless

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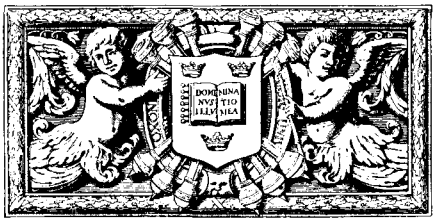

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commitment of families, which takes as its model mother-love."

This early education in non-technological, extended family living was the basis, she says, of all her writing. Lately, Greer has been accused of betraying her past. Those who cut their teeth on the radical liberationism of *The Female Eunuch* were dismayed by *Sex and Destiny*'s reactionary and sentimental preference for matriarchal peasant families over the liberated, "child-hating" West. Certainly the tone has changed from the raunchy outrageousness of Greer's sixties style: the voice of the Oz trial and the Town Hall Mailer duel and the Amsterdam Wet Dream Film Festival and "Suck" ("the first non-sadomasochistic sex paper"), telling us to drink our own menstrual blood, abandon the missionary position, and throw away our underwear. Now it's all heartfelt polemic about the evil effects on the underdeveloped world of Western technology, or the inadequate international responses to the Ethiopian famines.

Still, she is right to insist on her consistency. She has always taken a high moral tone on the nastiest effects of capitalism, from cultural imperialism to pornography. "It is curious," she says in *The Madwoman's Underclothes*, "to find myself an architect of the permissive society, when all the time I was one of its bitterest opponents." Her romantic attraction to Third World matriarchies provided her from the start with an antidote to the sexual narcissism of the West. Now we can see the roots of the argument.

Daddy . . . is full of alternative family models, like the calm, graceful (and wholly idealized) Brahman household of her hosts in India, or the good-humored friendliness of a Queensland country party. What they contrast with, of course, is "mother." After her first visit to a rural Australian family home, at fifteen, Germaine told her father that "these country women were real people":

> If we lived in the country I reckoned Mother's energy would be absorbed, and not frittered away in flightiness. "I didn't know women could be like that," I said. "Like what?" "Resourceful, straightforward, capable, funny, proud, independent, you know." I might have said, "Not vain, capricious, manipulative, unreliable, girlish, affected, infantile."

That unspoken reply became *The Female Eunuch*.

Since so much of her writing consists of prescriptions for family life, Greer's own childlessness is a bitter irony, which this book touches on with dignity. (I was less moved by her compensating soppiness about animals, from the red Essex cat who shares her moods to the squashed kangaroos on the Queensland roads.) "A woman with neither father, husband, nor son," she sets out, in a sense, to give birth to her own father, to re-create him, to take possession of him: "I wanted to find my own father, not my mother's husband." Giving birth to the real "Reg Greer" is a process as painful, mentally, as parturition, and comes to feel more like a death than a birth. But it involves a more positive form of re-creation, too, a subversive rewriting of the male history that created female eunuchs like "mother" and failed fathers like "daddy." So the book takes an exhilarating revenge, not only on a father and mother, but also on a mother-country.

Revenge, though, is embroiled with the need to know and the need to forgive. (These mixed motives are compounded, as "mother" is the first to observe, by the need to earn back a large advance from Heinemann. At times, as Germaine tours the world, appears on chat shows, and consults famous friends in her pursuit of the Greers, the whole thing takes on the look of a canny promotional package: great locations, great plot, and all that *human* stuff.)

There seems to have been a great deal to forgive. What she remembers about Daddy is, first, that he wasn't there. When she was five, he came back from the war, looking old and ill. That was in 1944. Thereafter, he kept his clever, aggressive, curious daughter at bay. He never hugged her. He never praised her. He favored her brother. He made silly jokes when she asked him questions. He told her nothing about himself. He despised everything that was beginning to interest her: books, music, culture, the wider world. She "hardly knew him"—and then she left home.

Forty years after his return from the war, she went back to Australia because he was dying, and found him, abandoned and pauperized, in a horrible derelicts' hostel: "In every subtle and crazy detail the work of my mother." Rescuing him, and watching him die, her ignorance of him began to obsess her. In an article written before this book, she described (with a typical mixture of vulgar sentimentality and urgent curiosity) "a certain expression" that she found in his face in the last few months of his life, "an almost indescribable look which contained elements of trust and puzzlement, of skepticism and innocence. It was as if all the veils of social attitudinizing and defensiveness had been stripped away and for an awful moment I could see into my father's soul." What was in there?

She knew a few things. Reg Greer was a newspaper advertising salesman, but he was "posh": dapper, leisured, condescending to his peers. He was supposed to be English, born in South Africa to parents passing through Natal on their way to a "temporary sojourn" in Australia, and brought up in Launceston, Tasmania. In 1937, when he was thirty-two, he married Peggy LaFrank, a part-Italian Catholic nineteen-year-old would-be model, whose family, in true Australian style—"no names, no pack drill is the Australian way"—didn't bother to find out anything more about him than that he seemed "a good bloke." In the war, he worked on secret "cipher duties" in Cairo and Malta. He told everyone he had endured the terrible siege of Malta in 1942. Invalided out for "bronchial catarrh" and "anxiety neurosis," he came home via India, which he hated. For the rest of his life, he resisted any attempts to fill in the gaps in this patchy and dubious biography.

"Reg Greer" turns out to be a hollow man, a set of ignominious secrets. One of the few true facts, his war work for ULTRA, the Allied operation for decoding German signals, seems too good to be true, since Germaine's decoding of Reg Greer's ciphers begins and ends with misleading documents. She has a passion for libraries—places where Reg Greer would never have set foot—and (hence) takes a naive and touching pleasure in describing herself in them. She forges through bureaucracies worthy of an Australian Dickens: the Registrar-General's Offices in Hobart and Melbourne, the Archives Office of Tasmania, the Melbourne Veterans Affairs building. Like the RAF intelligence officers in wartime ("our deception people," as the bosses called them), she "sinks up to her armpits in bumf": her parents' marriage certificate, back issues of Tasmanian newspapers, passenger lists of ships, her father's RAF forms, his repatriation file. . . . What she can't track down is his birth certificate. As she tours the world and comes back full circle on her "demented pilgrimage," "Daddy" falls apart.

His war illness, it transpires, was anorexia—a pitiable and "girlish" disease—not the strain of the Malta bombardment, which he in fact missed by several weeks. Like the faked-up war record, the "posh" manner, the "English" background were all an act. There *were* no English Greers going from Natal to Australia, no Greers in Tasmania, no Greer journalist on the Launceston paper, no "Reg Greer" at all. "Daddy" was the illegitimate child of a domestic servant, who was the daughter of a farm laborer, granddaughter of convicts, and he was fostered, along with numerous adoptive siblings, by a remarkable wom-

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an (also from a family of convicts and laborers) called Emma Greeney, whose name, family, and upbringing Reg Greer entirely repudiated. It's this betrayal of the true mother, the extended family, the working-class Australian history, that his daughter cannot forgive.

By the end of the quest, no piece of him seems real to her. He smoked a pipe to make himself look more distinguished. His "beautiful teeth," which he said were lost in the war through poor diet, were a false set. His dark hair and mustache, which made him look so like the English actor Basil Rathbone, were dyed. He is like Edgar Allan Poe's "The Man That Was Used Up," an impressive-looking military man who, deconstructed piecemeal by the amazed narrator, turns out—chest, scalp, voice box, and all—to be a total artifact: the "real man" is, horrifyingly, a squeaky little lump of blubber.

Poe's story makes a grotesque satire on male heroism. Greer wanted her father to be a hero, not a bounder, but she recognizes the desire as a weakness. Her quest is, in the end, not merely personal. It sabotages the official male version of war and colonization, and rewrites her father's history as "herstory," "puncturing" the false ideology that made him pretend to be toff, a hero, and an Englishman. The deconstruction of Daddy involves, too, a demystification of Australian facades: genteel pretensions, suburban domestic respectability, picturesque tourist spots, and unecological agriculture are all vociferously exposed.

The tone is bossy and enraged. Germaine Greer loves to lecture, she is relentlessly moralistic, and she has a passion for educative details. So there are energetic sermons on the Australian ecology and some splendid effusions, for instance on pioneering life in a small Tasmanian town, circa 1910:

> They arranged fêtes, bazaars, raffles, contests, made cakes, garments, bibelots, etc. for the fêtes, bazaars and so forth, attended race meetings, cricket matches, regattas, football, cycling, hockey, rifle shoots, lectures on theosophy, hypnotism, spiritualism, exotic religions, gave parties for engagements, weddings, anniversaries, visitors from the mainland, retiring dignitaries, grew things, cooked, embroidered and preserved things for the local show, and competed in practically every human activity including rabbit-skinning, sheep-shearing, and the woodchop.

If her research takes her to a 1919 Launceston menswear shop, we get a lip-licking list of the fabrics on sale ("the taffetas, in fashion shades of mole, mastic, putty, nigger and bottle"); if to a local theater, we get the full program of shows and artistes. No opportunity is lost for a display of horticultural or culinary know-how. Maltese goat an unpalatable wartime diet? No problem!

> If the goats' meat had been properly hung or marinaded in a smidgen of garlic and oil in sour goats' milk or yogurt, or rubbed with pepper, it would not have smelled so disgusting that only the starving dogs and cats would eat it.

But fear and dread underlie the bustling energy; and that's what makes this an impressive and troubling document. Greer says of the book's heroine, Emma Greeney, that she knew that "the doctrine of inherited moral defect was a doctrine of despair." She herself emphasizes all the points of difference between herself and her father. But these differences may, rather, be reactions: because he was secretive, she won't put up with anything "hush-hush"; because he obscured himself, she became an exhibitionist. "There is no bucking the genes." And if she is like Daddy, she may also—a much worse thought—be like Mother. The specter of determinism, the "doctrine of despair," looms over this superstitious narrative. One of the contemporary world's most redoubtable, self-invented public characters confronts the possibility that she has had no choice. She looks in the mirror, and sees the staring face of a woman possessed.

HERMIONE LEE is the author of *Willa Cather: Double Lives* (Pantheon).

An Americaine in Paris

BY TERRY CASTLE

Genêt: A Biography of Janet Flanner by Brenda Wineapple

(Ticknor and Fields, 361 pp., $24.95)

History was made at *The New Yorker* recently when, in the course of a review of the work of the late Robert Mapplethorpe, the gifted photographer whose explicitly homoerotic images have excited the wrath of bigots and would-be censors far and wide, the art critic Ingrid Sischy used the occasion, gracefully and courageously, to come out in print. She'd first seen, and been moved by, Mapplethorpe's photographs "at a time in my life when I was afraid of what might happen—and worried about how my parents would feel—if I said I had a girlfriend, not a boyfriend." It was a relief, she acknowledged, to find Mapplethorpe addressing the subject of homosexuality "in an unqueasy, honest, and often beautiful way." What was memorable about Sischy's own moment of candor was precisely its context. Though *The New Yorker* has always been hospitable to homosexual writers—and especially lesbian writers—this was the first time, surely, that one had spoken up as one in its pages.

One cannot help wondering what Janet Flanner—for fifty years the Paris correspondent for *The New Yorker* and herself a lover of women—would have made of Sischy's revelation. As Brenda Wineapple suggests in her new biography, Flanner—who published her famous "Letter from Paris" in *The New Yorker* from 1925 to 1975 under the decorous, sexually ambiguous pseudonym Genêt—believed in keeping her emotional life private. It would never have occurred to her to make a public profession of her lesbianism, least of all in the pages of the magazine to which she remained proudly devoted throughout her long and distinguished career.

Such reticence was partly prudential, of course. Flanner was without question the best-known woman journalist of her epoch, and her prominent position demanded a certain discretion. In the cruel 1950s especially, Flanner would have been a fool to make an obvious point of her sexual persuasion. Wineapple thinks that her subject's circumspection was also symptomatic, that it was the sign of an essentially secretive and "compartmentalizing" sensibility. From the start, Wineapple argues, Flanner's life was shaped by an impulse toward concealment: "Genêt" was only the most visible mask, according to her biographer, behind which Flanner hid the idiosyncrasies of a passionate and often conflicted nature.

Who was Janet Flanner? Later in life, Flanner liked to claim that she had "no

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biography" before the 1920s, when she moved to Paris, established herself in the bohemian and expatriate circles of the Left Bank, and began writing for Harold Ross's fledgling *New Yorker*. Regarding her early life she was, admittedly, inclined to be disingenuous—in part, one suspects, because of the pain the subject caused her. Born in 1892 into a stolidly bourgeois Indianapolis family, the second (and the wittiest) of three daughters, Flanner grew up in comfortable, progressive surroundings. But there were disquiets under the surface. When pressed for information about her parents, Flanner typically said that her father had made his fortune in real estate; but his actual profession, Wineapple reveals, was that of a high-class undertaker. (As late as 1972, at the age of eighty, Flanner was still trying to convince a cousin to remove the name "Flanner" from the family business, Flanner and Buchanan.)

Flanner also tended to suppress the fact of her father's suicide, in his own mortuary in 1912. It was an event that left the Flanner daughters solely responsible for their demanding, often histrionic mother. Between 1912 and 1921, Flanner made a series of increasingly desperate attempts to escape the oppressive maternal orbit. Hoping to become a novelist, she attended the University of Chicago for a year (she never received a degree), worked briefly as a drama critic for the *Indianapolis Star*, and finally, on impulse, married a man named William Rehm, with whom she moved to Greenwich Village in 1918.

The marriage was not a success—the two separated almost immediately—but the three-year New York sojourn turned out to be fateful. For there, while working on her only novel (later published as *The Cubical City* in 1926) and mingling with members of the Algonquin Club, Flanner met the sloe-eyed, exotically named Solita Solano, the first of the three women with whom she was to be erotically and emotionally involved for the rest of her life. Solano was a reporter for the *New York Tribune*, spoke numerous languages, and was active in artistic and suffragist circles.

Like Flanner, Solano, whose real name was Sarah Wilkinson, had things to hide. She hated her middle-class background (she had renamed herself after a mythical Spanish grandmother); and she, too, had recently fled an unhappy marriage—literally, by climbing out a window. Sharing a distaste for the philistinism of postwar American life, Flanner and Solano felt an immediate accord. When Solano received an assignment from *National Geographic* to report on political affairs in Greece and Turkey, it seemed only natural that the two women—who were also now lovers—should pool resources and go to Europe.

Asked later why she had chosen to live in France, Flanner explained that she had "wanted Beauty, with a capital B." "I was consumed by my own appetite to consume—in a very limited way, of course, the beauties of Europe." Wineapple paints a more complicated picture. Flanner was unquestionably glad to get away from her fractious mother, whom she had left—for good, as it turned out—in the care of her younger sister. Paris provided a kind of sensual, emotional, and intellectual fulfillment that all of her years in the Midwest—and even the time in New York—had failed to supply. Soon after settling in Paris in 1922, Flanner and Solano entered into the salon life of the city: their homosexuality, far from being a hindrance, provided a crucial entrée into the most fashionable literary and artistic coteries, the majority of which were dominated by wealthy English and American lesbians.

Flanner became friendly not only with Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas, for whom she felt a lifelong affection, but also with Natalie Barney, the renowned author, hostess, and sapphic seductress, whose house on the Rue Jacob featured a small "Temple de l'Amitié" around which she would dance with her female guests. (Other decidedly "lesbic" acquaintances included Djuna Barnes, Sylvia Beach, Romaine Brooks, Margaret Anderson, Georgette Leblanc, and Dolly Wilde—the stylish niece of Oscar—who sometimes masqueraded as her celebrated uncle.) Expatriation, Flanner discovered, was a paradoxical kind of homecoming: after the glum appurtenances of Indianapolis, "Paris, France" seemed to welcome her with "an old girl's countenance, shaded by a trollop's gay wig."

She also discovered her vocation. In 1925, when Jane Grant, writing on behalf of her husband, Harold Ross, asked Flanner to contribute an occasional "Letter from Paris" to Ross's new magazine, *The New Yorker*—something that would include "incidental stuff on places familiar to Americans" along with "dope on fields of the arts and a little on fashions"—Flanner, recognizing that her old dream of becoming a novelist had faded, jumped at the chance. Her first Paris letter (to which Ross himself appended the byline "Genêt," imagining it to be the Frenchified version of "Janet") was an immediate success. She was soon writing regular thousand-word dispatches, delighting in her new life, and posing for photographs.

In the famous 1927 Berenice Abbott portrait reproduced on the cover of Wineapple's biography, a strikingly handsome woman gazes straight at the camera, her strange Merlin-like white hair aglow. Though clad, outlandishly enough, in a dinner jacket, striped pantaloons, and dandified top hat—the last festooned with a black and a white mask—the new foreign correspondent looks imperturbably chic. That "Genêt," at thirty-five, had at last found a world sentient enough to contain her was evident: nor would she soon relinquish what she had found.

Flanner's "Letter from Paris" was a fortnightly testament to her love affair with her adopted city. The basic format of the letters never altered, though Flanner's journalistic interests evolved and deepened as the decades passed. Her pieces from the 1920s—devoted mainly to scandals, exhibitions, musical events, the doings of the smart set—tended to be lightheartedand gossipy in nature, befitting an enchanted epoch. She often drew on friends and acquaintances for material: Picasso, Stein, Joyce, Loie Fuller, Nancy Cunard, Josephine Baker, Virgil Thomson, Beach, Isadora Duncan, Colette, Radclyffe Hall, and Mistinguett all make their appearances against a backdrop of cafés and salons, first nights and fancy-dress balls. And already the hallmarks of the famous Flanner style were present: the ironic flourishes, the polysyllabic wit, the taste for glittering catachrestic, sometimes macabre description.

Attracted by anything baroque, theatrical, or outlandish, Flanner perfected a prose to match—full of spectacular figures, mordant turns of phrase, adamant alliteration, and a sinuous, burnished, fantastical beauty. Thus Isadora Duncan, Flanner wrote, had, "with her heroic sculptural movements," arrived in Paris "like a glorious bounding Minerva in the midst of a cautious corseted decade," but ended her career in neglect, "dropped by the wayside, where she lay inert like one of the beautiful battered pagan tombs that still line the Sacred Way between Eleusis and the city of the Parthenon." Of Diaghilev's dancers she noted that they had "psychology in their muscles as well as in their minds"; a performance of Prokofiev's *Le Fils Prodigue* (choreography by Balanchine) featured "not only Lifar but the witty, graceful, brutal, burlesquing, intellectual legs of the Russian Ballet." Alice B. Toklas, according to Flanner, welcomed guests at the Rue de Fleurus like a "praying mantis among strawberry leaves." The delicate, tiny-voiced chanteuse Yvonne George

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(whose special forte was nautical songs) "sang of sailing ships, which her tenderness reduced to the size of the little barks retired sailors imprison in bottles."

Flanner was delighted by idiosyncrasy in any form. Colette, she mock-seriously informed her readers, was the first "dendrophile" of French letters: she brought her Parisian audience "news of nature" with "the strangeness of a traveler who tells of an unknown land." The celebrated *grande horizontale* Liane de Pougy wore emerald rings on her toes, but "only when in bed." Barbette, the Texan-born acrobat who performed on the high wire at the Cirque Médrano in female costume, liked to adorn himself with "fifty pounds of white ostrich plumes" along with a diaphanous white skirt: against the blue background of the Médrano, his "fabulous *chute d'ange* fall" had "the mythical quality of a new Phaethon deserting the sky." Describing Sarah Bernhardt in old age ("a one-legged, insoluble mystery on a litter, muffled beneath wigs, false teeth, furs, veils, leopard skins, and make-up"), Flanner noted that the eccentric actress had made for herself "a museum of all the false limbs manufacturers sent her on approval, and planned to buy a park to try them out in, but forgot."

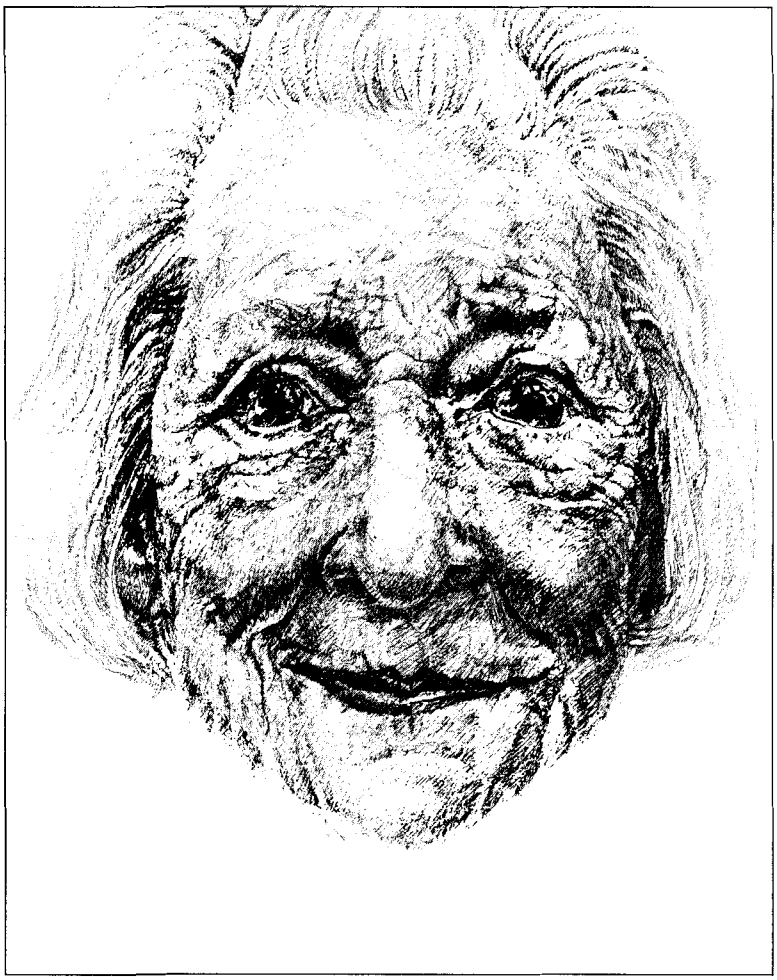
Such ceremonial, absurdist turns (modeled, perhaps, on her idol Gibbon) were a Flanner speciality. But she never let the blandishments of style overpower her commitment to truth. At the end of the Bernhardt piece, amid a dazzle of prose rivaling Bernhardt's own legendary refulgence, Flanner's respect for her subject shone through:

> At her last dinner parties, she was brought in after her guests, was propped up at the end of her table like a painted mummy, alternately simulating fright, shyness, and loss of memory, though forgetting nothing, seeing all—an amazing old actress and female, still rich in wit, revenge, surprise, chatter, contempt of and hunger for the human comedy.

Beginning in the 1930s, with the gradual darkening of the European situation, the Paris letters began to strike a more somber, populist note. An ardent believer in Lincolnian democracy—a legacy of her Midwestern upbringing that she never repudiated—Flanner viewed the international rise of "nauseating fashionable fascism" with unmitigated disgust. In her journalism from the thirties, on inflation, bread riots in the streets of Paris and Berlin, the rise of Hitlerism, refugees from Spain, the Munich crisis, and so on, she revealed an unexpected gift for political and economic commentary.

Still, she never lost her interest in the quirks, vital or malign, of human character. In the devastatingly Swiftian (and prescient) profile of Hitler that she published under the title "Führer" in February and March 1936, she used her standard satiric technique—the accumulation of small, perverse, homely details—to underline her loathing for the demagogue and his politics:

> Dictator of a nation devoted to splendid sausages, cigars, beer, and babies, Adolf Hitler is a vegetarian, teetotaler, non-smoker, and celibate. He was a small-boned baby and was tubercular in his teens. He says that as a youth he was already considered an eccentric. In the war, he was wounded twice and almost blinded by mustard gas. Like many partial invalids, he has compensated for his debilities by developing a violent will and exercising strong opinions. Limited by physical temperament, trained in poverty, organically costive, he has become the dietetic survivor of his poor health. He swallows gruel for breakfast, is fond of oatmeal, digests milk and onion soup, declines meat, which even as an undernourished youth he avoided, never touches fish, has given up macaroni as fattening, eats one piece of bread a meal, favors vegetables, greens, and salads, drinks lemonade, likes tea and cake, and loves a raw apple. Alcohol and nicotine are beyond him, since they heighten the exciting intoxication his faulty assimilation already assures.



JANET FLANNER BY DAVID SCHORR FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

The deceptively neutral manner is typical. Hitler's bleak digestive regimen, exposed here in almost clinical detail, becomes the metaphor of a poisonous hatred of life. Against such soul-destroying asceticism—the costiveness of the moral or political fanatic—Flanner waged a lifelong, eloquent battle.

Flanner spent the war years in Manhattan, having fled Paris in September 1939; but she returned to France immediately following the liberation. Her postwar dispatches, on the bombed-out cities, the newly discovered concentration camps (she was one of the first journalists to enter Buchenwald), and the slow rebuilding of European society contain some of the most incisive and heartfelt writing she ever did. She continued to write extensively about politics in the fifties and sixties, reporting in detail on the vicissitudinous career of de Gaulle (whom she admired), the bloody and protracted Algerian crisis, the fluctuating French economy, and at the last, the tragicomic events of May 1968.

In turn, her achievements as a journalist received international acclaim. In 1948 Flanner was made a knight of the Légion d'Honneur for "services to France"; in 1959 she was elected a member of the National Institute for Arts and Letters; and in 1966, when her Paris letters from 1944 to 1965 were republished as a book (edited by William Shawn), she won the Na-

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tional Book Award. *Paris Was Yesterday*, a collection of her *New Yorker* writings from the twenties and thirties, was published, also to great acclaim, in 1972. She died in 1978, having written her valedictory "Letter from Paris" in 1975.

Wineapple seems most comfortable with Flanner in her later years—indeed, with Flanner the much-decorated public figure. She is at her best describing the externalities of her subject's life: Flanner's financial and living arrangements (she spent most of her time in Paris in rooms at the Hotel Continental and the Ritz), her relations with editors and publishers, the glamorous international milieu in which she lived and worked. Yet one cannot help feeling that something about Flanner—the private woman—has eluded her.

The problem, it must be said, has to do with Flanner's lesbianism, a topic with which Wineapple often seems uncomfortable. True, she gives a more or less straightforward account of the two women with whom Flanner became involved after she and Solita Solano gradually moved apart in the 1930s: Noel Haskins Murphy, an American widow living at Orgeval, outside Paris, whom Flanner met in 1932, and Natalia Danesi Murray, the Italian journalist and publishing executive for Rizzoli, with whom she fell in love while in New York during the Second World War. But she seems unwilling to dwell very deeply on the embodied side of Flanner's passions.

She seldom refers, for example, to Murray's moving collection of Flanner's love letters, *Darlinghissima: Letters to a Friend* (1985), despite the remarkable, often lyric revelations contained there. "I found in my papers a Kodak picture of you in a white long skirt on the back porch of the Fire Island house"—Flanner wrote to Murray in the 1970s:

> It must have been taken by me, I suppose, in the first week of our new love for each other. How we burned and so publicly. I could report on each motion of our bodies. I recall them all so vividly. Poor John [Mosher] so choked at the waste of oil in the lamp that I let burn all night when we lay awake.

Flanner and Murray were lovers for almost thirty years. But the Flanner capable of such "tender love achievements"—the investor in the treasury of physical passion—is almost entirely missing from Wineapple's pages.

More troublingly, Wineapple is inclined to exaggerate what she thinks of as Flanner's "conflict" over her homosexuality. "Genêt," Wineapple is convinced, became over the decades a disguise behind which she hid her sexuality from the world. Posing as an "androgynous, anonymous, invented" being gave Flanner a needed sense of "security" and "legitimacy," but also left her, according to Wineapple, guilty and ill at ease. Wineapple points to Flanner's notorious perfectionism—she fretted over each of her *New Yorker* essays and constantly worried that she was losing her gift—as a symptom of this inner turmoil. Impersonating "Genêt," the biographer hints darkly, "may well have robbed [Flanner] of her own voice."

Yet this is far too bleak and simplistic a view. So taken up is Wineapple with the notion of Flanner's guilt, which she associates with her lesbianism, that she is unable to recognize how "gay" in every sense Flanner's *New Yorker* writings really are. Granted, Flanner's "Genêt" style is arch and impervious, like any code. And, like any great stylist, Flanner struggled with the intractability of words. But for anyone who can read the code—for a homosexual reader, perhaps—her Paris letters are a veritable trove of emotional information.

It is not merely that Flanner chose to write so often about homosexual subjects. (Her meditations on Proust, Stein, Cocteau, Colette, Bricktop, Radclyffe Hall, Gide, Thomas Mann, Ravel, Violette Leduc, and others constitute a kind of ongoing brief on behalf of modern homosexual sensibility.) The manner itself is gay, often to the point of blithe and outright camp. Thus, recollecting Radclyffe Hall, whose scandalous lesbian novel *The Well of Loneliness* (banned in England) was published in France in 1929, Flanner remembered Hall's "beautifully tailored suits" and "perfect haircut"—along with the comical inadequacies of her fiction. "The Paris Latin Quarter denizens first met her at a tea (with wonderful cucumber sandwiches) at Miss Natalie Barney's, heavily attended, since *The Well of Loneliness* had aroused a great deal of curiosity, if very little admiration as a literary or psychological study." Here, a succession of discreet yet unmistakable cues (perfect haircuts, Miss Natalie Barney, cucumber sandwiches) function as kind of witty semaphore, clueing in the reader that the author herself knows whereof she speaks.

At times Flanner's writing verged on the palpably homoerotic, especially when she came to describe, as she often did, women's voices and bodies. She took a Saint-Simonian pleasure in female beauty. Early in her career she celebrated Josephine Baker's "caramel-color body," the charms of La Goulue ("a pretty, full-fleshed blonde of the mortal Olympian type popular with gay Edwardians the world over"), and Tiana Lemnitz's "handsome" Octavian in a 1930s *Rosenkavalier*—her favorite (and the most sapphic) of modern operas. Writing about Wallis Warfield Simpson during the abdication crisis, Flanner gave an ironic yet subtly appreciative itemization of Mrs. Simpson's most attractive features, ending up at her "small and elegant" feet, which—as she dryly noted—"in these days of Riviera sunbathing, are well-known."

Later on, in the sixties, she mused memorably over the flickering vision of Brigitte Bardot on French color television, "casting on the screen the image of her sensual flesh, the long, yellow straight stream of her ocher hair, and the odd, nacreous shading of her personality, with something intimate about it, like the inside of a seashell." Perhaps her most overtly erotic piece of writing ever, though, was her account of the Ingres retrospective in Paris in 1968, in which she dwelt rhapsodically on the bather in the foreground of *Le Bain Turc*: that "isolated, splendid female nude, seated on a carpet and fully displaying that superb, naked, idle, womanly back—that perfectly fleshed view, with averted face, that over time has become Ingres's chaste anatomical trademark." The sight of this and the other gloriously "bare-backed" women in Ingres's paintings, Flanner observed, had been without question the "major pleasurable event" of the year.

Wineapple is oblivious to this not-so-cryptic kind of self-revelation, as she is to the niceties of Flanner's style itself. (Of the Ingres piece, she notes only that Flanner wrote "lovingly" of the pictures she had seen.) The result is a curiously morose, at times even misguided, portrait of her subject. Wineapple's Flanner is a humorless, somewhat neurotic figure who never quite seems to match up with the magnificent, wry presence revealed in photographs. Wineapple has performed a service by uncovering many previously unknown facts about Flanner's life, especially her early years, but something of the essential nature of the woman has been lost—her sturdy enthusiasm for life and her confident acceptance of herself, including her sensual lesbian self. To discover this crucial missing element, the unmistakable Flanner gaiety, one must turn to the writing itself. If "Genêt," in her magical letters from Paris, did not reveal her soul in so many words, what she did share with her readers—her ineradicable, coruscating delight in the world—was in its own way a perfect coming out.

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Low Fidelity

BY ARTURO CRUZ JR.

Self-Portrait of the Other by Heberto Padilla translated by Alexander Coleman

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 247 pp., $19.95)

In days of yore, Cuba symbolized the Perfect Revolution, replete with youth, romance, and heroism. Those were its best times, when the colors of the revolutionary struggle against the dictator Fulgencio Batista had not yet begun to fade: the clamorous public funerals of fallen student protesters; the noisy suicides; the attacks on the army barracks; the torture and the suffering, followed by Fidel's daring landing on the eastern side of the island; the guerrilla struggle; the triumphal march into Havana; the first hundred speeches of the new Maximum Leader. For one magical moment, it all fit together. There, for all to see, was the image of a young, defiant Fidel, arguing with Vice President Nixon (while President Eisenhower was off playing golf), of Fidel dazzling the students of Princeton with his poses of intellectuality (barely overcoming his hesitant and imperfect English), of Fidel at the end of the day, surrounded by his aides in front of a hotel in Harlem, the very tribune of the wretched of the earth.

The Perfect Revolution: confronting the Americans, embracing Mikoyan, a tiny island opting for the lonely march toward socialism. It was like the triumphal scene from an opera—militiamen (and militiawomen) everywhere, artillery deployed along Havana's seawall, machine-gun emplacements on the flat roofs of the colonial buildings in the Old Town; and everywhere the familiar silhouette of Fidel, marked by thick glasses and a luxuriant beard, mounted atop the tank from which he would command victorious forces at the Bay of Pigs. The island was swept up by a genuine popular euphoria. Huge crowds packed into the Plaza de la Revolución to intone in a staccato tropical rhythm the slogan of the day—"*Cuba sí, Yanqui, no!*"

Even from a distance, Fidel felt warm and intimate. Just Fidel, no last name needed, much less "generalissimo," "benefactor," "Señor Presidente." He was the cultivated warrior, surrounded by writers and poets, and the supreme iconoclast, who made fun of the cult of personality, who mocked the elephantine statues of Stalin and the pharaonic portraits of Mao Zedong or Kim Il Sung.

The Cuban revolution came into the world when it was needed most—at about the time of Khrushchev's secret speech detailing the crimes of Stalin. It takes some effort to recall it today, but in those bitter times Cuba seemed like a much needed breath of fresh air in the stultified world of East bloc socialism. Fidel's revolution revived the exhausted utopias of the Old World. In our limitless revolutionary imagination, the socialist abstraction had to be defended at all costs, and its horrors in the Soviet Union written off to the barbarous customs of Russia, to its isolation, even to its weather. In the Cuba of Fidel—blessed by fresh sea breezes, a gentle tropical climate—everything would be different. The New World was on the verge of creating the New Man; mulatto hands would construct the genuine, the undefiled version of socialism. The revolutionary imagination could rest easy at last.

The revolution was armed by history, and so nothing that occurred in its name could shake the faith, including executions in cold blood. In any case, the majority of Cubans supported the summary executions, treated them as if they were carnival acts, urged the marksmen on. How could there be a revolution, after all, without terror, without shedding some of the blood of the old regime? But if executions were all right, so, too—by an insidious leap of logic—was the closing of newspapers. The *Diario de la Marina* was, after all, the organ of the privileged, the white Cubans, and as for the others, from *La Prensa Libre* all the way to magazines like *Bohemia* and *Carteles*, they were relics of a journalism about to become obsolete, incapable of adjusting themselves to the exciting new times.

Later, when the new authorities dared to close the cultural supplement of their own official daily, *Lunes de Revolución*, some people felt that it was time to draw the line. Certainly the revolutionary credentials of most of the editors and the contributors were beyond socialist reproach, and no one could claim that the paper had not made a serious effort to accommodate itself to the new order of things. Already in his famous "Words to Intellectuals," Fidel had laid down the law on the nettlesome topic of cultural and literary freedom: "Within the Revolution, everything; outside of the revolution, nothing." Those who could not understand what this meant were incapable of understanding anything at all, and the revolution could not afford to waste more time on intellectuals and their anxieties.

In the early 1960s Cuba had its own small version of the Vendée in the province of Escambray, where peasants turned into guerrillas against the revolution. With astounding speed, they were expelled from the moral universe of our revolutionary imagination. They were criminals, retrogrades, ingrates—whatever you will—as proved by their desire to own land, or worse still, to be rich peasants, like the hated *kulaks* who plagued Stalin's historical project in the Russian countryside.

But other things became more difficult to explain. The revolutionary imagination abroad discovered that in Cuba special camps had been established to incarcerate thousands of homosexuals ("to make men of them"), where they were put through a grueling regime of physical labor and military discipline. A no less rigorous treatment, it was learned, was being applied to prostitutes, vagrants, and other "social misfits." But once again the Perfect Revolution was saved—this time by heaping all of its deficiencies onto the shoulders of history, in this case Cuban machismo or the remnants of Roman Catholicism. And if that failed to convince, there was the perfect villain, the provincial bureaucrat. Did Fidel know about all of this? We were assured that he did not; and when foreigners forced him to take official cognizance, he finally shut the camps down.

With the advance of the revolution, more unpleasant contradictions continued to emerge, but the regime defended itself against the wind and the tide. Even when Fidel justified the entry of Russian tanks into Prague, his sympathizers could avow privately that he had no choice. After all, could he do without Soviet oil? When the economy virtually committed suicide in 1970—Fidel having lost his gamble on a ten-million-ton crop of sugar—the Maximum Leader went to the Plaza to offer his resignation to his people. Far from accepting it, they wept with sympathy and withheld all reproach.

One way or another, we could rest easy. The errors of Fidel were those of a

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man with good intentions, someone trying to accomplish too much in too little time—to eliminate private property, to do away with double-entry bookkeeping, even with money itself, and to harness the guerrilla will to the transition to socialism and communism. Under Fidel the Cubans ate half as well as before, but everybody ate. When all else failed, there was always the consolation—the Spanish press found it particularly alluring—that after all Castro had made a revolution ninety miles from the United States and had lived to tell the tale.

Years passed, and things got no better. In some ways, they got much worse. And the Perfect Revolution finally met its match in a poet, a brilliant and imprudent poet by the name of Heberto Padilla, with his snatches of wicked humor, a boy from the provinces used to the aroma of tobacco (he hailed from Pinar del Río) and the piquant, cynical humor of immigrants from the Canary Island—a Cuban who hated the heat of the tropics and the baroque exuberance that it generated in the Spanish language. He happened to be, as luck would have it, the best poet of his generation. He plainly loved the poetry of the English language, its poetry of intellect, disposed to confront the contradictions of its age. Padilla's poetry sought clarity above all things, paring away unnecessary words, and insisting upon the fact of human imperfection. In *Legacies*, in a poem called "The Childhood of William Blake," he wrote:

> Oh, Blake, the twentieth century
> Is not a child's drawing with angels and
> devils warring!
> It's the trap
> we struggle in, this rain
> that blinds us.
> They have destroyed the larders.
> There are no signs,
> no codes
> the Ministry of War
> cannot decipher.

Heberto Padilla was born in 1932, the grandson of a tobacco grower who also processed the leaves and exported them to the United States and Spain. As a young student, before the family business fell into bankruptcy, Padilla spent his mornings reading French and German authors, and slowly falling in love with American literature, which he believed was capable of examining and dissecting reality without renouncing the beauty of language. Like all decent young men of his generation, Padilla was anti-Batistiano, and like all the children of the islands and the small countries, he yearned to connect with something larger, with the universal. So he left for the United States; but when the excitement of revolution beckoned, he returned home. In 1962 he published *El Justo Tiempo Humano* (The Just Time of Man), a book of poems that to this day is discreetly acknowledged in intellectual circles as the greatest volume of Cuban poetry. Later Padilla traveled as Cuba's envoy around the socialist world, but on his return he became the revolution's enfant terrible, its biting critic.

Unlike many colleagues, Padilla did not restrict his doubts about the revolution to private conversation. He broadcast them to the four winds. In late 1967 he defended the novelist Guillermo Cabrera Infante, who had fallen afoul of the authorities and been pushed into exile. In an article in *El Caiman Barbudo* (The Bearded Alligator), he demolished the work of Lisandro Otero, a major cultural bureaucrat, in less than three paragraphs; he openly rejected the notion, so dear to the regime, of the "organic intellectual"; he covered with scorn a certain National Poetess, whose entire work was a paean to the myth of the revolution. To whom but Padilla would it have occurred to submit, in 1968, the manuscript of his book of poems, *Fuera del juego* (Out of the Game) to the Casa de las Américas, the official state publishing house? This foolhardy gesture had an unexpected, or rather an entirely Padillan, outcome. Owing to the courage of the jury—it would never again be invited to participate in such competitions—*Fuera del juego* walked away with first prize.

Protected by his talent and his fame, Padilla continued to write poetry, continued to express his doubts. He doubted everything—the solemnity of History; the importance of heroes; the virtues of suffering; the scientific nature of Marxism-Leninism. With Galileo in mind, he wrote:

> The best poems have always
> been born
> beneath the jailer's lamp.
> There is no true story
> that has not a prison background.

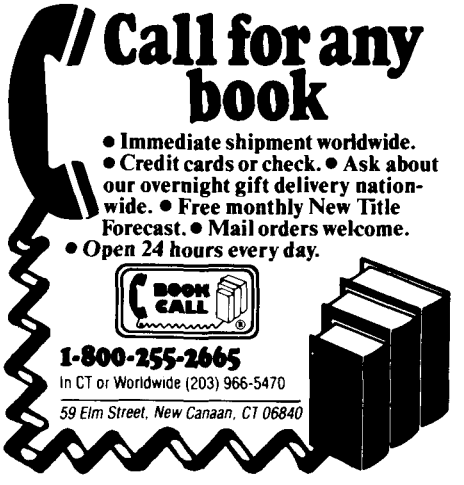
Padilla even questioned Castro himself. And then in 1971, at a gathering at the Writer's Union in Havana, in a hall full of curiosity-seekers, he proceeded to read some poems from the manuscript of his new book, *Provocaciones* (Provocations). The next morning Padilla was arrested "for offenses against the Powers of the State."

From that morning on, at least for the revolutionary imagination, the Cuban revolution ceased to be the Perfect Revolution. The island was inundated by protests. For thirty-seven days Padilla was confined to the Villa Marista house of detention, where he was questioned and tortured by his "comrades" from State Security. In his cell he wrote and rewrote a "letter of self-criticism," and on the day of his release he appeared, thin as a skeleton, before the assembled powers of Cuban intellectual life, who had come to hear his confession of guilt and his promise of penance.

That night Padilla said many things. He blamed everybody—his wife, his friends, himself. He spoke of his vanity, of his literary petulance. He begged forgiveness from the important cultural bureaucrat he had offended in print. He conceded that his friend (the one who had fallen afoul of the authorities and now lived in exile) was a CIA agent after all. But above all he begged forgiveness for his "betrayal" of Fidel:

> And let us not number the times that I have been unjust and ungrateful with Fidel, of which I will really never tire of repenting. And only the desire, really the vehemence, with which I would like to rectify that ingratitude and that injustice could, if not compensate for it, at least clarify somewhat that it was nothing more than cowardice and a counterrevolutionary attitude.

On the face of it, Cuban State Security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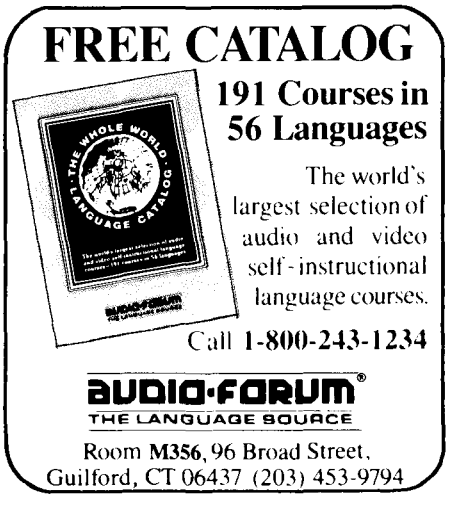
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had succeeded: it seemed to have destroyed the image of Padilla, to have depicted him as a weak intellectual driven by vanity and by whim, without sufficient moral strength of character to accept the consequences of his words and actions. When the evening ended, however, the effect was precisely the opposite of the one the authorities had intended.

By the very extravagance and fierceness of his self-criticism (complete with repeated references to his "comrades in State Security"), Padilla had triumphed by parody. He had recreated the Moscow trials of the 1930s. The European intellectuals recognized his act for what it was, and protested with renewed vigor. There were, of course, a few exceptions—people who simply could not live without the Perfect Revolution. There was the Argentine novelist Julio Cortázar, for example, who had graduated from an early infatuation with Franco to a more "scientific" adoration of Castro. Cortázar had protested Padilla's imprisonment earlier; but after Padilla was released Cortázar rushed to write the Maximum Leader a public apology, begging his forgiveness, insisting that he had signed the protest without knowing what he was doing.

Others were less demonstrative, but found other ways of saying much the same thing—that Padilla was a foolhardy and self-destructive man, a troubled man whose obsessions complicated the lives (and the careers, if truth be told) of others. Still, in March 1980, at the behest of Senator Edward Kennedy, Castro allowed Padilla to leave Cuba and to settle in the United States. Unlike the vast majority of exiles, Padilla entered his refuge not in Miami, but through Canada to New York City.

Self-Portrait of the Other is a memoir of Padilla's case, and offers a moral evaluation of his twenty years inside the Cuban revolution. It is written with remarkable restraint. The prose draws on a prodigious memory, and it is surgically exact. This is a book rich in images of personalities large and small, of stories of his youth and of his later travels in the socialist world: of his friendship with Yevtushenko, of his walks around Moscow with Sartre in search of a decent cup of coffee, suffering the cold air of the Russian steppes but complaining of the infernal Cuban heat. But there are darker tales here, too.

There are memories, for example, of the Communist Party chief Aníbal Escalante, purged by Fidel, and consigned to the bureaucratic limbo of the Soviet cultural apparatus. Padilla's book is rich in recollections of Cuban friends—Juan Marinello, one of the few genuine intellectuals of the Communist Party (like Martí, Padilla writes, "he was a grave man, distant and untypical of a Cuban"); Carlos Franqui; Guillermo Cabrera Infante, and his beloved friend Alberto Mora, the good revolutionary who became a minister of the government, and then—his dream destroyed by reality—committed suicide. And of course, there is Che Guevara, with whom Padilla had many discussions, while Guevara lay gasping on his cot, fighting off asthma attacks and railing against the "original sin" of the intellectuals—of all intellectuals, who had neither the ascetic discipline nor the proletarian origins to be good revolutionaries.

Self Portrait of the Other was written by a man who learned to walk without ideological crutches. It is a remarkably unpretentious book with a profoundly human voice, the work of a man who suffered. In a recent interview with the Mexican magazine *Vuelta*, Padilla was asked to link his literary creativity to his suffering. "In truth," he replied, "my suffering has been useless. The years I lived in Cuba were filled with suffering, and the ones I have lived here have merely perfected it." For Padilla "here" is the United States, the celebrated Free World; and what he suffered here was "perfected," in the first years after he arrived, because he arrived prematurely. Padilla left Cuba before the news of perestroika, glasnost, and the execution of General Ochoa—that is, before the momentous events that robbed Castro of all sympathies and made him look like an anachronism. The poet who spoiled the Perfect Revolution had to learn that ideological dreams may die in their own home, but sometimes they endure in the homes of neighbors and admirers. In New York, Mexico City, and Madrid, Castro was still "Fidel." Many of Padilla's friends were not yet prepared to become Castro's enemies.

Now, despite Gorbachev, the Berlin Wall, Prague, and Bucharest, Padilla remains pessimistic about Cuba's immediate future. Fidel and his brother Raul retain control of the army, the military counterintelligence services, and the state security forces. And beyond the Castros' control over the machinery of terror, and the disappearance of a competing hero (Ochoa) and a potentially rebellious institution (the recently dissolved Ministry of the Interior), Padilla is pessimistic about Castro himself. He is a great manipulator of the Cuban people's anxieties, a caudillo who, like the father who forgives and punishes, has been endowed with morbid magic powers. Padilla lingers, in his memoir, over Castro's fascination with the oratorical prowess of Mussolini and Napoleon. "True works of art," he wrote in his letters. "How well he [Napoleon] understood the French! In each sentence he was able to play on each one of their emotional strings; he was playing with them."

It is hard to know how long Castro will play with his people, how long the Cubans will prefer to swim the ninety miles. In the meantime, Padilla will be at home in Princeton, tired of traveling the future, relieved to be beyond his jailers' reach, with the memory of his departure from Cuba, and of its leader's farewell admonition: "Don't get the idea that happiness is waiting for you on the other side."

ARTURO CRUZ JR. is the author of *Memoirs of a Counterrevolutionary: Life with the Contras, the Sandinistas, and the CIA* (Doubleday).

TRB *continued from page 4*

ficially for tax purposes, thus making the economy less efficient as well.

Lindsey's observation that the affluent have "enormous discretion" over the declared size of their incomes raises another point that defenders of the trends of the past decade don't emphasize. Income distribution statistics include only the income that top-bracket people choose to declare. If Lindsey is right on this point (which he is), income distribution in this country is far more unequal than even the Ways and Means Committee contends.

What Lindsey and others call "the politics of envy" is merely the recognition that the tax code *should* mitigate inequalities in income to some extent. More political types than Lindsey implicitly acknowledge this by denying the truth about what has happened to the tax code during the 1980s.

MICHAEL KINSLEY

CORRESPONDENCE *continued from page 2*

bly slimy and pecksniffian. . . ." Does TNR still hold a grudge?

SHELDON L. RICHMAN
Woodbridge, Virginia

Garry Wills responds:

How does the fact that Mencken opposed lynching blacks and proposed admitting Jews affect his serious argument (in his book on Nietzsche) that both are racially inferior? Most people oppose lynching dogs or harassing cats without considering them their equals.

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MANAGUA DIARIST

Partisanship

THE MORNING AFTER THE ELECtion I was in the crowded lobby of the Augusto Sandino International Airport, ready to embark. A fair-haired young woman clutched a tiny radio and held it to her ear. "Who's that speaking?" someone asked. "The *former* president of Nicaragua," someone else put in. The young woman raised her head from the speaker and said in a trembling yet not quite daunted voice: "He's still the president of Nicaragua." She was right. It was Daniel Ortega on the radio, saying that the principal contribution of the Sandinistas to Nicaragua was democracy—and thereby putting himself in the same ambiguous league as Pinochet.

NEVER HAS A GOVERNMENT INvited so many international observers to observe an election process, Jimmy Carter correctly told a press conference before the election. He might have added that never has a government denied visas to so many international observers, either. One of the groups invited by both the Sandinistas and the opposition was the Center for Democracy. But by January the Center began to have difficulties. The Sandinistas took from them the right to observe the counting of votes and reduced their team from seventy-five to twenty-five. "They became partisan," said Comandante Rafael Solis in explaining why the government did not even reply to their visa applications. The "partisanship" began when the Center reported on a violent incident in Masatepe in a way that displeased the Sandinistas. From that point on everything the Center did was "partisan." Even the slogan "Your vote is secret," although approved and promoted by the Supreme Electoral Council, was deemed partisan when printed on the Center's baseball caps. And maybe the Sandinistas were right to see subversion in that slogan, given the contrast between the opinion polls and the actual election returns.

ALLEN WEINSTEIN, THE PRESIdent of the Center for Democracy, talked about his group's difficulties at a press conference on election eve. The audience, about sixty people, consisted almost entirely of nasty loudmouths, at least some of whom wore press accreditation cards. The questioners began by doubting his reporting of the Masatepe incident, then expressed their astonishment that Weinstein saw anything unfair about the Sandinistas' treatment of the Center. "Are you alleging that the difficulties of one meaningless group can invalidate the whole process?" asked one journalist. (Declining to rise to the bait, Weinstein answered simply, "No.") After more hectoring, a journalist in a military shirt stood up and admonished Weinstein for talking about irrelevant details instead of "telling the right story," i.e., that a miracle of national reconciliation and democracy was going on under the Sandinistas' guidance. By then the press conference had turned into a political rally and the guerrilla journalist received loud applause.

IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA, WHERE I live, the kind of sloganeering and rhetoric I heard—not from the Sandinistas but from their *internacionalista* supporters—was, until recently, the background noise of our lives. The difference is that at home nobody really believed in such stuff—not the captive audience, and not the speakers, either. Or at least I'm too young to remember such a time. For that you have to go back to the late forties and early fifties. I had to come all the way to Managua to find out what it was like. The Revolution is glorious and great, the complainers are just small meaningless groups, dissidents are just embittered individuals, etc.—all of this said with passionate conviction. Weinstein didn't even attack the Sandinistas. But he failed to join the choir. In Managua, just a couple of months after my country awoke from the totalitarian nightmare, I got a whiff of the atmosphere of its beginning, as exhaled by the Sandalistas of the Western world. I suddenly realized how far from home I was.

I DO NOT WONDER AT THESE journalists. I almost fell in love with the Sandinistas myself. They are better-dressed than UNO members, they're younger, they play rock 'n' roll, they paint graffiti, their vice president is a novelist, and their minister of foreign affairs is a Maryknoll priest. What humdrum old democracy can beat this? And now another hope for mankind has gone down the drain. What is left to our enthusiastic parajournalists? North Korea?

WEINSTEIN FACED THE HOSTILE pack with calm, matter-of-fact decency. If the prosecutorial attitude of some of those present was strikingly like that of Prague secret police investigators, Weinstein's own demeanor reminded me a little of an Eastern European dissident. He just said what he had to say. Of course, he was in no danger of going to prison for it. But then, being a dissident is not primarily about the will to go to prison, or even about opposing one's government. It is about wanting to have a normal, reasonable life and not having to feel ashamed. The will to go to prison is just a corollary. An important one, granted, but nothing more.

STILL, THERE IS A VAST SPACE between becoming a dissident and a Communist apparatchik. Michael Kinsley is probably right in saying that apparatchiks "were just playing the game by the rules they were given, as most of us do" (TRB, March 5). But "their basic values" were not "found wanting and rejected overnight." In Czechoslovakia, at least, some people rejected them from the very beginning, others rejected them during the fifties and sixties, and during the last twenty years these values were held only by mentally disabled people and by "a special breed of people," in Stalin's famous phrase. To say that their "moral universe" was "suddenly turned upside down" is a wild exaggeration. They had no moral universe to be turned. Maybe Communist apparatchiks are driven by the same motives as American politicians, but the rules of the game make all the difference. I prefer not to feel sorry for those deposed Communists. When you have too much moral sympathy for the fallen dictators, you may easily forget the people who had to live under them. Anyway, TNR is a wonderful source of agreeably clashing opinions. I envy the tolerance of the place. If Kinsley had been a Czech samizdat writer, he would probably have been excommunicated from the underground during some bibacious, late-night intellectual debauch.

HOW VARIOUS POWERFUL AMERIcans might have turned out had they been born in Eastern Europe—another question Kinsley asks—is hard to tackle, and impossible for a foreigner like me. But maybe I can help you imagine yourselves in the place of Czechoslovak "bourgeois" democratic politicians after World War II. You weren't particularly able, courageous, or farsighted—after all, you failed to prevent the Communist takeover in February 1948. But don't be overmodest: the Communists would probably still have considered you worth putting in prison. If you were quick enough to pick up the rules of the new game, perhaps you could have survived in high politics without becoming a Communist. But if you feel you would have had neither the guts to go to prison nor the stomach to work with the Communists, don't give up: you could have emigrated. To America!

MARTIN WEISS

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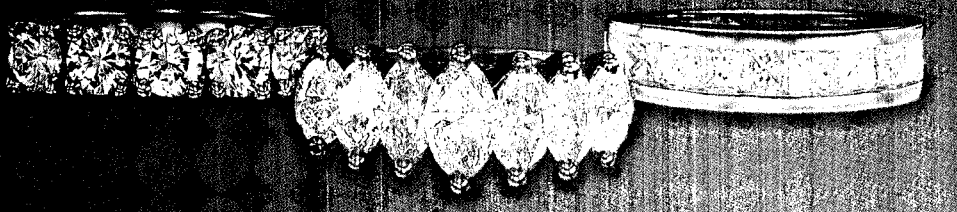

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